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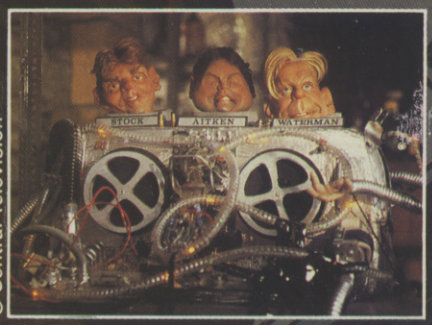

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Competition
page 32

BRINGING HOME THE CH A

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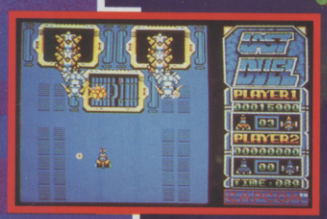

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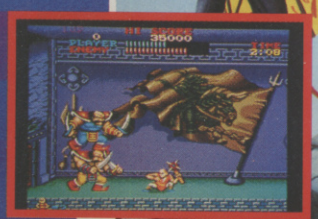

TIGER ROAD™

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Screen shots from various systems

GIANTS OF THE VIDEO GAMES INDUSTRY

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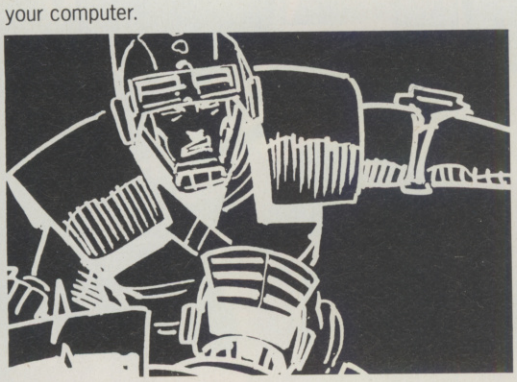
SPECIALS

MAKING MUSIC 25
Our new music editor, Jon Bates, kicks off with an overview of the music-making possibilities offered by your computer.

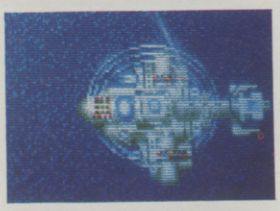


GOING TO WAR 88
In the ACE wargame special, resident combat freak Andy Smith gets to grips with a batch of wargames, while our friend Zog ponders the future of computer wargaming. All the details, in glorious technicolour.

GAMEPLAY

ARCADE ACE 22
Andy Smith finds out what's new and exciting in the arcades and brings us a special report from Flashback, the world's largest video-only arcade. Feast your eyes!

SCREEN TEST 37
A full run-down on all that's hot in the games world, including reviews of the latest Sega and Nintendo products, an evaluation of the long-awaited *FOFT*, island-hopping with *Archipelagos* and a close look at *Millennium 2.2*.



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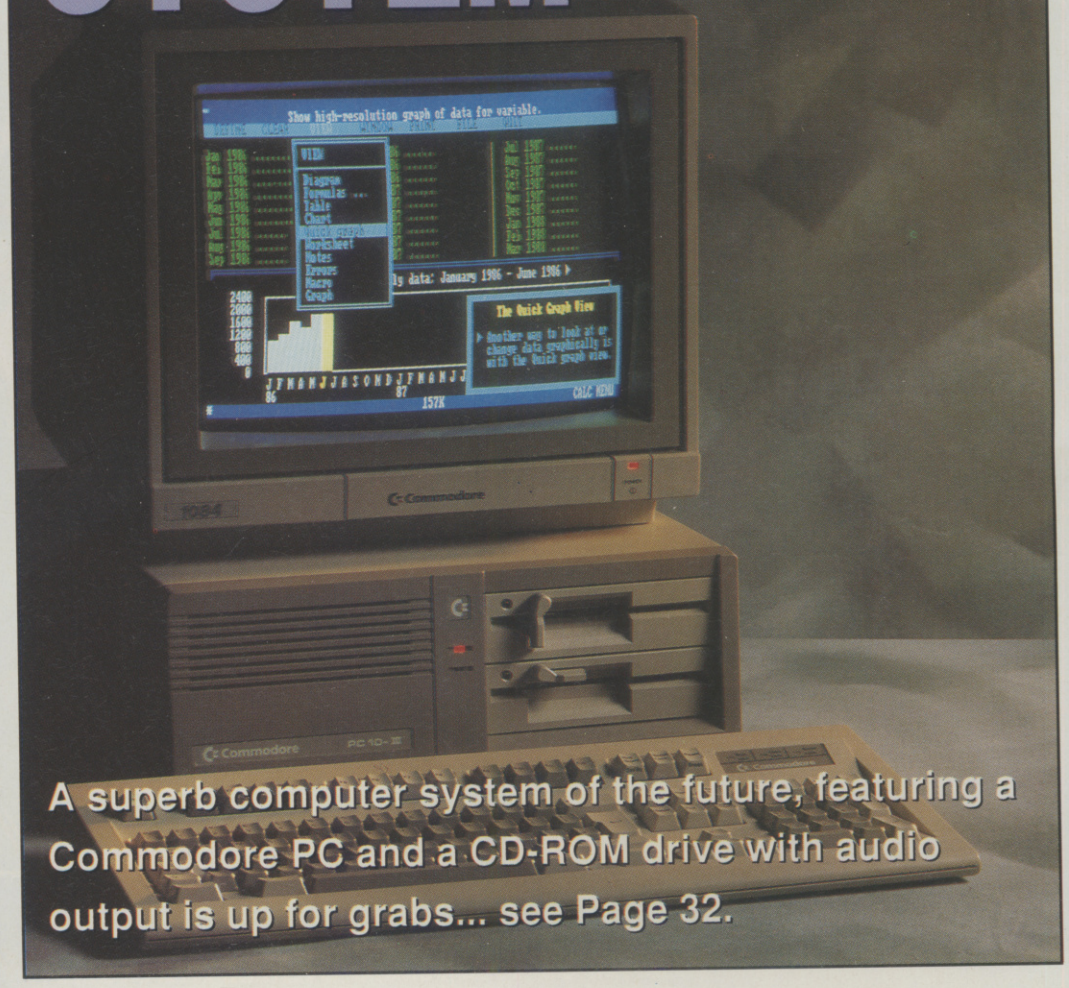
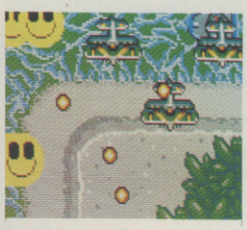


A superb computer system of the future, featuring a Commodore PC and a CD-ROM drive with audio output is up for grabs... see Page 32.

SCREENTEST SUPPLEMENT **65**
The full update service, as usual, together with a quick peek at what's happening in the budget world.

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS **69**
Sega console owners have cause to celebrate over this month's special two-page T'N'T feature, which is jam-packed with maps, hints and tips. Meanwhile, on the computer front, players are treated to game-busting info on *Galdregons Domain, Dragon's Lair, R-Type, Joan of Arc* – and much, much more besides.



ADVENTURES **86**
Our guru gears up for the release of new titles from Infocom, offers readers the chance to take part in a Mediaeval weekend and monitors the all-new ACE Adventure Conference...

REGULARS

NEWS **8**
The PC Engine is finally available over here in the UK. We check it out and tell you where to find it. Other developments are taking place on the CD front... find out for yourself what's happening...

LETTERS **12**
A pot-pourri of opinion – your change to get on a hobby horse and ride it into the pages of ACE.

GRAPHICS **83**
Brian Larkman takes *Pro Artisan* through its paces on the Archimedes and delves into his pixel postbag.

THE BLITTER END **130**
And it's goodbye from us.

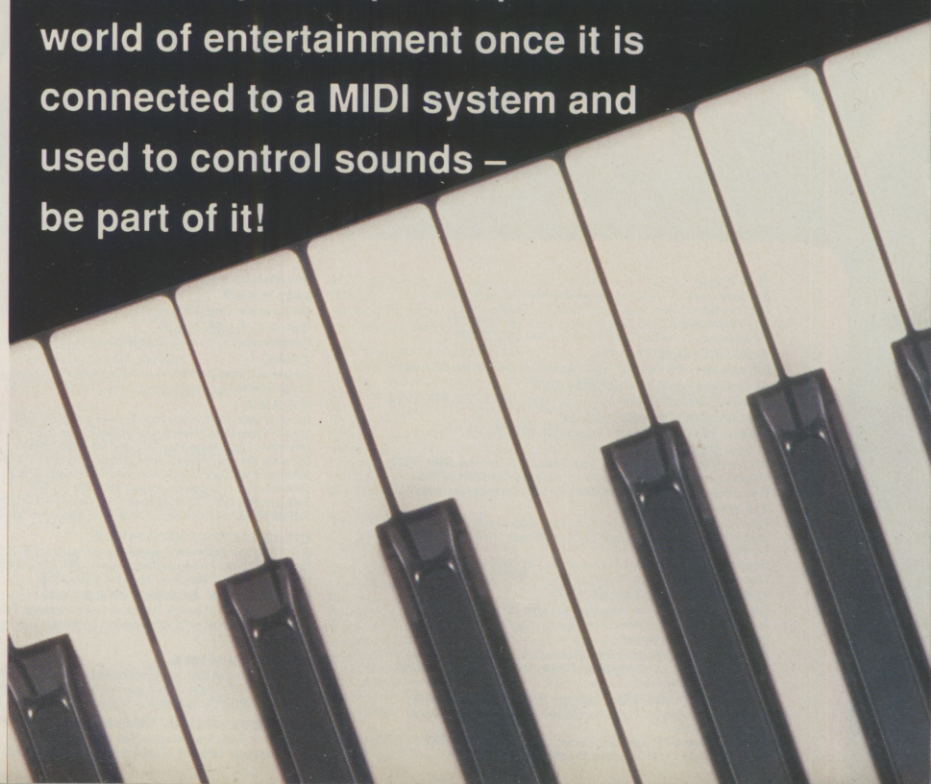
PINKS

Loads of goodies this month, including TWO helpings of Nigel from Rigel! Why? Because after his unscheduled holiday last month a few of you may be suffering with-drawal symptoms. N'Gar's still on the rampage so read about his latest exploits. If it's more cerebral stuff you're after hunt down the Prize Crossword (with correct grid this month) and Puzzle. PLUS all the other wibble, wibble, wibble hat-stand completely year planner '89 over Roger ignite afterburners...(!)

A SOUND ISSUE

Making music can be one of the most rewarding applications of the home computer. Thanks to today's technology, you don't need to spend years mastering the techniques involved in playing instruments well. All you need to do is communicate with a few chips and they will do all the hard work of producing violin sounds, harpsichord noises or whatever.

Anyone with an ear for a tune can use a computer to make beautiful music. But where to start? We tell you how this month, and show you how on the cover-mounted audio cassette. The home computer opens up a whole new world of entertainment once it is connected to a MIDI system and used to control sounds – be part of it!



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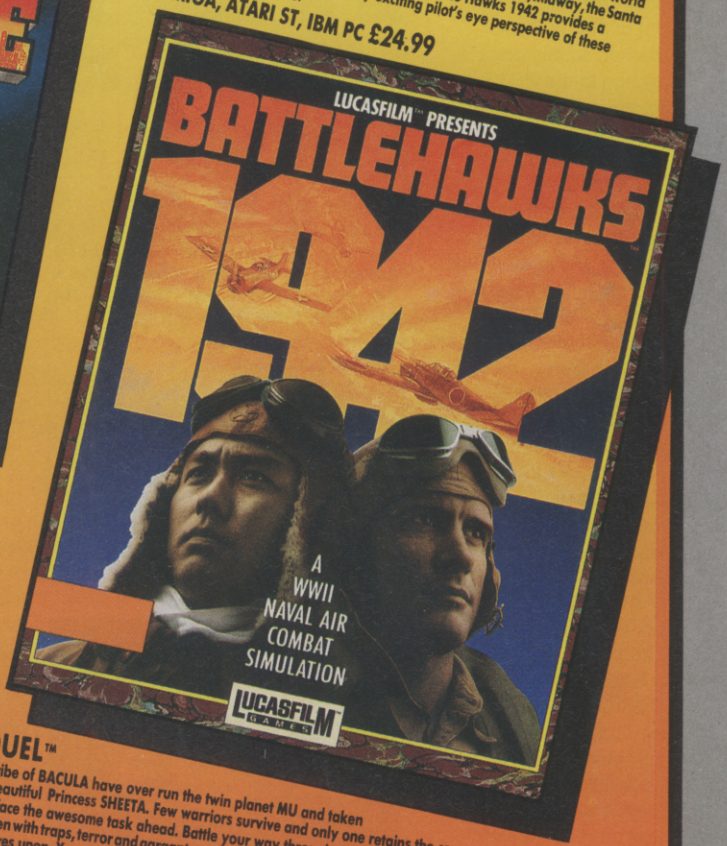

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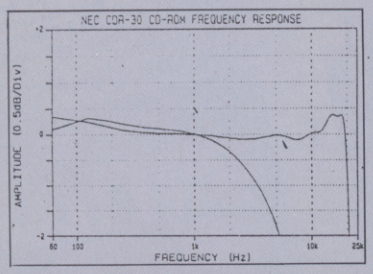
GETTING CD AUDIO FROM THE ENGINE

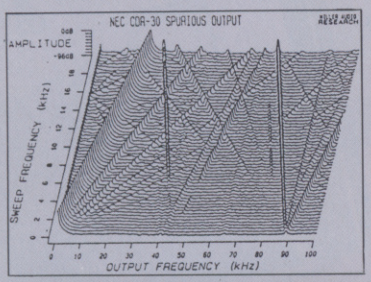
How does the Engine's CD ROM drive measure up as an audio player? HiFi Choice's CD specialist Paul mIller puts it through his test lab....

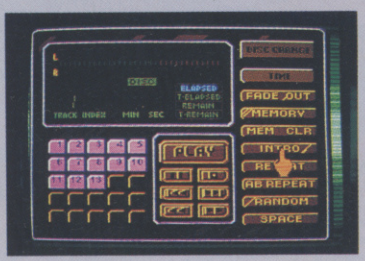
To all intents and purposes NEC have pulled out of the UK audio market, so this portable add-on to the PC Engine will be waving the corporate flag on its tod for the time being. The CDR-30 is equipped with rudimentary controls such as track skip and all-repeat but when used in conjunction with the PC Engine a variety of other features are accessible. These include A-B repeat, fast music search, direct track access, a 99-track random access memory and intro-search – the sort of features available on all self-respecting CD players costing upwards of £250.

Technically, the CDR-30 is pretty basic with both harmonic and intermodulation distortions hovering around the 0.1% mark (@ 0dB) with an output level some 3.7dB below the nominal CD standard at 1.3V. The 3D plot uses a peak level 0-20kHz sweep and highlights those IM products associated with the 44.1kHz sampling frequency and its multiples (ie 88.2kHz). Those products manifesting to the left of the sweep fall within the audio range. Noise, channel balance and separation are acceptable for this kind of machine though the 15.5Bit linearity came as something of a surprise. Note the falling response of the headphone output which will sound progressively more dull as the volume is increased.



Above and below: HiFi buffs will get the full picture from these detailed test results. The Engine's CD player was put through its paces on Paul Miller's test rig.





Controlling the PC Engine's CD player in audio mode from the control panel.

Via the line outputs this player sounded moderately detailed and tonally neutral, but it was also rather lacklustre and uninvolving. Deep bass notes were conspicuous by their absence, while stereo perspectives were mildly flattened lending a thin, insubstantial feel to large scale orchestral works. Consequently the rhythm to Tanita Tikaram's 'Sighing Innocents' was tainted with a feathery quality, the leading edges of notes bereft of crisp clarity and transient impact. Nevertheless the player did not sound objectionably bright: coarse certainly, but not overly forward or aggressive.

In general terms the quality of this player was convincingly trounced by the better full-sized players, such as the Marantz CD65II, and portables like the Technics SL-XP6. Nevertheless the NEC player cannot be judged solely in the context of these conventional units because it also offers the flexibility of a fully-fledged CD-ROM drive. Buy it for the games potential and treat the playing of music CD's as something of a bonus.

CD-PLAYER:NEC CD-ROM

Frequency Response,
L: 20Hz-14.7kHz
R: 20Hz-14.9kHz

Channel Balance,
20Hz: 0.15dB
1kHz: 0.13dB
20kHz: 0.11dB

Channel Separation,
20Hz: 67.3dB
1kHz: 68.1dB
20kHz: 41.7dB

Left/Right Phase Error
@ 10kHz: 43° 12'
@ 20kHz: 86° 24'

De-emphasis Accuracy,
1kHz: -0.02dB
5kHz: +0.29dB
16kHz: +0.91dB

Signal to Noise Ratio,
(A-wtd): -84.6dB
(A-wtd, with emphasis):
-88.4dB

THD (L/R @ 1kHz),
0dB: -62.6dB/-67.0dB
-10dB: -59.7dB/-64.4dB
-30dB: -48.7dB/-56.0dB
-60dB: -25.3dB/-24.7dB
-80dB: -6.8dB/-7.1dB
-90dB (undithered/dithered):
+8.0dB/-1.6dB

CCIR IMD, 19kHz/20kHz,
0dB: -59.8dB
-10dB: -50.4dB

SMPTE IMD 400Hz/7kHz,
2nd Order: -57.2dB
3rd Order: -62.7dB

Suppression of stop-band intermodulation: -26.3dB

Resolution at -90dB,
L: -3.32dB R: -3.31dB

Peak Output Level,
L: 1.306V R: 1.284V

Output Impedance (line):
1.502kohm

Track Access Time: 2.5secs

Serial Number: 8Z002740E

Typical Retail Price: £290

The first low-cost CD ROM system is now available in the UK as part of the PC Engine's range of peripherals. Further to our report in the February issue, yes, the Engine is now officially on sale in Britain...

The CD ROM drive, which costs an addtional £400 with the interface if you buy it from Micromedia at the same time as your Engine, is the most affordable CD ROM system available. True, you could always spend between £500 and £1,000 on a CD ROM drive for an IBM PC compatible, but so far Atari's oft-demonstrated CD drive for the ST is still under commercial wraps. Atari, it seems, can't see the point in releasing a drive when there's no software to run on it. Not forgetting Macintosh owners, who can spend lots more money on Apple's CD ROM drive, but as with the PC, the software emphasis is on serious applications rather than entertainment.

New firm Micromedia is currently importing PC Engines from Japan with the blessing of NEC and Hudsonsoft, the creators of the system, and is busy arranging to sell the hardware and a selection of software both by mail order and through high street shops.

Micromedia plan to offer the full range of hardware add-ons, including the Multi Taps that allow several players to join in the action on selected games, the CD ROM player and interface, and additional joysticks and controllers. The basic Engine will be provided in the UK with either a SCART video output (the cheapest option) or PAL modulator so that it can be connected to a standard colour TV set. Top of the Micromedia range is the PC Engine Mission control, which includes a Phillips 883 medium resolution colour monitor, the CD ROM drive and interface, the Engine itself, power supply, joypad and a CD ROM game - *Fighting Street*, more commonly known in the arcades as *Street Fighter*. If you already have a monitor or TV set that can accept a SCART input, the basic pack of PC Engine, power unit and controller – the minimum system configuration – is available for £199.95.

Andrew Smales, the man behind Micromedia's import drive, is clearly excited by the prospects for the PC Engine, and has invested fairly heavily in producing the ultimate PAL interface so UK users can get the best out of the Japanese Engine. NEC have maintained that the Engine is 'a strategic product' so far as Europe is concerned up until now and appeared mystifyingly uninterested in the European market. The level of NEC interest in Europe is still, presumably, low, as they have left brand new

THE ENGINE ARRIVES!

Compact Disc ROM hits British shores with a vengeance, but largely without software. Only three CD ROM games are in existence at the moment... two of them for the PC Engine.

company Micromedia to produce the PAL interface themselves. Some UK software houses are interested in supporting the Engine, in particular Telecomsoft, but no-one seems keen to commit development money and actually start writing games for it yet.

In America, however, things are looking rather different – NEC are about to launch the Engine in the States themselves, and American developers are already actively contemplating writing games for the system. Cinemaware's Dave Riordan states that his Interactive Development team are looking closely at the Engine and its CD ROM drive and are already talking to NEC about producing games – more of that next issue, in our round-up of Compact Disc games and their future.

The American interest could lead to a flurry of Engine programming. Smales comments: "with the full launch scheduled in America later this year, the plans for software will make the PC Engine one of the most versatile and well-supported games machines in the world."

The current range of Japanese titles includes some really hot arcade conversions from the likes of Sega, Irem, Capcom and Namco, along with some impenetrable games that only make sense to a native Japanese ➤

(Left) The basic PC Engine unit slots into a neat interface unit, snuggling next to the CD ROM/audio CD player. To run a CD ROM game, a disc is placed in the player and an accompanying smart card slots into the Engine. A special card is used in the Engine when you want to play audio compact discs through your stereo.

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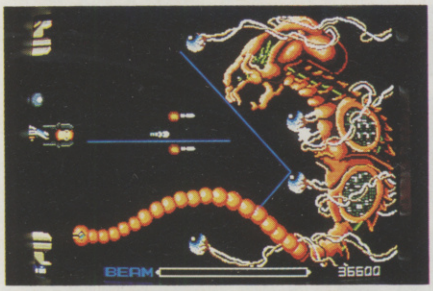

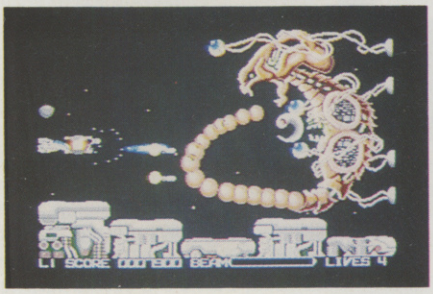

PC Engine versus ST. The same end-of-level guardian, from R-Type on the Engine and R Type on the ST. Can you tell which is which? Hint: the one at the top is from the Engine... Good, isn't it?

speaker, and two CD ROM products. To start with, Micromedia will be offering a selection of around twenty titles from the library of fifty games available, selling them for £29.95 each. Expensive, but not desperately so in the light of 'standard' Amiga and ST software.

The crack team of games reviewers here on ACE found the Engine's arcade conversions - such as R-Type and Galaga '88 - so addictive that the machine had to be locked away and limited to 'after hours' recreational use. without putting our Engine under lock and key during the day, this issue would never have arrived at the printers. Reaction to the CD ROM game was less enthusiastic - it was loaded and played for a while, and while the CD- quality sound effects and music were impressive the basic beat-em-up gameplay failed to impress. Street Fighter was really only a wow in the arcades while the machines had the pneumatic punchpads as controllers - when arcade operaters fitted standard joystick controls, fearing for the safety of their expensive cabinets, Street Fighter lost most of its appeal to tenpence-wielders.

CD ROM is definitely going to be the format of the future - within a couple of years it is likely to become the main medium for the distribution of games and, if you want to be at the forefront of new technology, investing in a PC Engine with CD drive will prove very tempting. Doubly so, if you don't already have a CD player - the Engine's player doubles as a standard audio machine which is controlled by software running on the Engine itself. We gave the system to Paul Miller, a specialist CD reviewer for the prestigious HiFi Choice magazine, and his comments on the audio capabilities of the system appear on the previous pages along with his analysis of its audio performance. HiFi Choice plan to run an in-depth review of the Engine in a future issue, so if you want a detailed run-down on its audio performance, talk to your newsagent about getting a copy.

We also asked Tony Takoushi to give us his opinions on Fighting Street, the CD ROM game. As might be expected, our Tone abandoned all reserve and reacted in his normal manner...

LEAP, SPROING, GIBBER, CAVORT

Put a PC Engine connected up to a CD ROM drive in front of Tony Takoushi, and the result is predictable. Predictable in the extreme. Street Fighter, or Fighting Street, really took his fancy...

" ...press the RUN button which fires up the CD Player and you are welcomed with a Capcom title screen and a young lad thumping his fist through the wall and the Fighting Street logo filling the centre of the screen. The attract mode cycles between the Capcom logo, highscores and a simple Fighting Street motif.

On pressing the RUN button you have to choose either one player or player 1 versus player 2 (that is a two player option to you and me!). On one player you then go to a course select, you can start in one of four countries Japan, USA, UK or China, there is some scintillating music and the title of the country chosen is announced.

You are then shown a portrait of your opponent with some more really jazzy music and then you go into the game, you walk in from the right and your opponent from the left the phrase MANDO! is belted out and you have to dive in and let him have it.

The moves are none too new but the speed of action, graphics digitised oomphs, aarrghhhs and screeches of pain are a little too close for my comfort, you really FEEL you are beating hell out of this guy! Every blow has a digitised guttural growl and the killer blow deciding the round has the opponent collapsing to the floor with a gut wrenching moan. THE MUSIC, THE MUSIC, THE MUSIC!!!!!

It is stunning jazz funk at its best and most evocative it totally enhances the play and makes you want to get up on your toes and kick around the screen in exhilaration! That is about the only way I can describe it.

You have to defeat each opponent over the best of three rounds, you have an energy guage and if it hits zero you lose completion of each round, so the quicker you are the higher the bonus. On defeating the enemies in each country you get to play a bonus round (breaking tiles/kicking plates around the screen are just two) again digitised speech is littered all over the place. If you are beaten a head shot of the enemy appears and a voice booms out, 'you have got a lot to learn before you beat me, try again kiddo' and a monstrous laugh follows. Similarly if you beat an opponent he appears and warns you 'What strength, but remember there are many guys like you all over the world!'

When you have beaten the enemy in one country a world map appears and a little plane flies to the next country.

Each country has its own characters and different backdrops with a discerning kung fu style, you have to watch and learn the moves to progress through the game.

As a debut game it is quite breathtaking and still has only touched the surface of the CD format, with companies in the UK and states looking at CD for games it clearly is a sector that has a long way to go and has a great deal of potential for the home games market.

The second CD is not so much a game as an interactive pop story where a young girl becomes a pop star with loads of hi-res piccys and japanese pop songs to be enjoyed along the way..."

Er, thank you Tony

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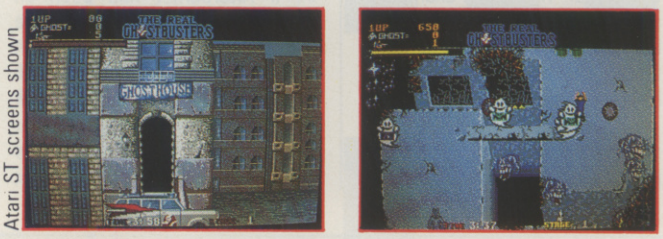

Atari ST screens shown

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Another month, another collection of views and opinion and another £100 worth of software to give. Only this month, the Editor gets back into stingy mode and dishes out a mere £25 worth. If you have something to say and fancy a crack at the contents of his wallet, put printer or pen to paper and send a missive to our Editor at: ACE LETTERS, THE EDITOR, 4 QUEEN STREET, BATH BA1 1EJ.

HYPER HYPER

Why are games continually exaggerated and not given a straightforward chance when they are released? I'm talking about hype – you know, that thing that can make or break a game no matter how good or bad it is.

I'm not saying that *Robocop*, as a game, didn't live up to the hype of being a brilliant coin-op and one of the biggest film tie-ins of the year. This is one example of a game that is 'made' by hype, but take an example of a game that is 'broken' by hype, and you have a different story.

Take *Afterburner*. The hype started as soon as a home computer version was mentioned, on account of its arcade big brother. When screenshots were available, magazines printed major previews of the game, and again reminded us how brilliant the arcade machine was and how good the game should be. Activision also added to this by printing mega, double-page advertisements all over magazines. But *Afterburner* could not live up to all the hype, and flopped in nearly all reviews.

If *Afterburner* had been an original concept, I'm pretty sure that it would have been given much higher ratings. Instead of this, it received bad publicity that it did not deserve. The hype that coin-op conversions receive before their release can do them harm – it is not always the game that is at fault.

A Alexandrou
Rickmansworth

True enough, some games suffer from hype, but others benefit from it as the next correspondent points out...

Major companies have been buying lucrative licences, such as *Afterburner*, and producing games that wouldn't sell well at any price if the game didn't carry the name of a highly successful arcade game. Because of the name, everybody clamours to get a copy from their local computer store and smaller companies lose business because the latest conversion is THE game to have. Nobody waits for a review – people just think that because it was a good arcade game, then it must be a good computer game.

Good licences can be achieved, like *Operation Wolf*, so why don't arcade game producers go for the company with the best programming team not the one with the most money?

M Richardson
Barton-on-Humber

If you buy a game without reading the reviews or getting a friend's opinion, you lay yourself open to being disappointed. By now, people should have realised

GIRL TALK

Mandy Flower's letter concerning the apparent lack of female computer-users raises some important points. I suggest the reason there are so few is probably because many females are not interested.

But why are they not interested? After all, during the latter half of this century we have been bombarded with a host of explanations as to why women do not participate in any number of activities. It has been suggested that they have been discriminated against directly or indirectly, culturally or in some cases because there has been some dastardly plot by men to prevent them joining in. In many cases these explanations may be valid, but may I venture to suggest that since computers, and in particular computer games, are a relatively recent phenomenon such explanations are hardly viable.

Unfortunately we may now be subjected to a tidal wave of propaganda. Before we know it there will be a women's page for female computer users, special computer programs that are friendly to women, books in simple language for the fair sex, special radio and television items along with special university and college courses.

Women must be amazed at the continuing degradation of their sex by this type of marketing. Mandy Flowers may express disappointment that there do not seem to be many female users, but already the Editor of ACE has subjected us to the patronising spectacle of suggesting a special female computer club. Wouldn't there be a stink if someone suggested an all-male computer club - and quite rightly so.

V Botterill
Hertford

Why, hold on there a moment. Women are more likely to be amazed by the continuing degradation of their sex in adverts that show women as gorgeous pouting bimbos with huge breasts and skimpy clothing who need to be rescued by butch hard guys. And as for being patronising, you've got the wrong end of the stick again matey. All I did was offer interested parties the facility to get in touch via ACE – which is hardly being patronising. The next correspondent has a rather more measured view on the matters you raise...

PRIZE LETTER

I agreed with a lot of what David Carter said in his letter, but found the whole thing rather patronising. Female computer users are quite capable of standing up for themselves without well-meaning people like David Carter trying to give us doll-dressing programs. It'll be housework simulators and supermarket arcade games next!

There is a great deal of sexism in the software industry, and most games to seem to be aimed at spotty fourteen-year-old boys. Your average male player may think it is great to wander around rippling with muscles and splattering everything that moves with his super-mega-laser in order to rescue the bimbo at the end, but this sort of thing is unlikely to appeal to female users.

I think that all this shooting and blasting is a way for teenage boys to prove how macho they are to their friends. Us girls just don't need that sort of thing. We prefer more intellectual software, and it is an interesting fact that a far higher percentage of females play adventures than arcade games. Infocom have already started tapping the female adventure market with *Plundered Hearts*, and most decent role-playing games (except *Bards Tale* – come on chaps!) have a female character option.

The most offensive aspect of the software industry at the moment are some of the Page Three-style adverts that even your illustrious magazine occasionally prints. Contrary to popular belief, women are not a bunch of helpless bimbos who depend on men to do everything for them, which is how they are depicted in these ads. This is a feeble stereotype – we are people too, and we are just as intelligent as men, so stop depicting us as if we only have bodies and no brains.

Emma Heggie
Salisbury

Sound opinions win you £25 worth of software, Emma. If ACE were an ideologically sound, non-sexist computer magazine then we would refuse to run advertisements that ran the risk of 'degrading' women. But with a rampantly sexist Ad Manager... er, I better stop right now, while I'm ahead. Another female perspective follows...

Why do some people have to make an issue over the fact that females are in a minority in the computer leisure area? Why do they urge us to band together and fight against sexism? Basically, it is obvious that computers will appeal more to men and so-called male interests – it is the nature of the beast. At the end of the day it is a man's world. Women have to be more adaptable, and not always by choice. We wear men's clothes as a matter of course - jeans, trousers and shirts being prime examples. Can you tell me the last time you saw a man wearing a dress?

ACE LETTERS

that not all arcade games convert equally well to being brilliant computer games, but it still seems that the name sells...
GK

ANOTHER CONSPIRACY THEORIST

I can't believe that you gave a prize to Keith Smith for his letter. To start with, the enemy in a computer game does not have to be inhuman and totally evil – it just has to be an enemy! To take up Richard Warden's point, simulators, such as *F-16 Falcon*, *Interceptor* etc have MiGs as the enemy (presumably Soviet ones). The enemy are not portrayed as inhuman and totally evil – just as a load of other pilots keen to shoot you down. The only consistent property of an enemy in a computer game is that he/she/it is trying to kill you. A game about machine-gunning a nursery-school playground wouldn't sell because there's no visible enemy present.

Then: "even in peacetime we are constantly being manipulated and taught to regard other nations as a threat – there can otherwise be no justification for the vast amounts of money spent on arms" has all the quaint naivety of a conspiracy theory.

Exactly which other nations is Keith Smith referring to? The Soviet Union, perhaps – currently the only nation to have invaded a European country since World War II, or is that another piece of propaganda Mr Smith? Or Libya – supporters of terrorists, or is this a distortion and is Colonel Gadaffi really totally peace-loving? How about Argentina – or do you claim that the Falklands were never invaded?

I don't think you can honestly claim we are manipulated into believing that certain other nations are threatening, unless you create a conspiracy so large that it folds under its own weight.

The idea of ordinary decent citizens committing acts that would normally disgust them paints a wonderful, rosy picture of a tranquil society, but it takes a bit of a battering when you look at the crime statistics. A large minority of people are prepared to attack, even kill their fellow citizens; a far larger number are prepared to use force to defend themselves. Witness the outcry every time the courts punish someone for injuring a mugger, rapist, or burglar.

I agree with Keith Smith on one point. The real world is not all black and white. Unfortunately, it is people like Mr Smith who like to see it that way – all people are nice and peaceful, all governments are nasty and evil. I hope one day he leaves dreamland and enters the real world.
Nigel Cole
Bristol

Well, that's the opposing point of view, for sure. Any more?

Most women have been channelled into believing that computers are for men, by the same logic used in saying boys play with cars and girls play with dolls. I feel that it is important that women do not miss out on this new leisure opportunity just because narrow-minded people state 'computers are for men'. I admit that it is also easy to be put off when you have to fight your way through hordes of schoolboys in the local stores that stock software or computer magazines. Once again, persevere, the end result is worth it.

Another myth is that computers are for the young. I am approaching 42 and I own a Spectrum 128, Atari ST and an Amiga.

Ladies, the ball is in your court. If you can't beat them, join them and stop moaning about being computer widows. The opportunities are there and the only person stopping your enjoyment is yourself.
Janet Low
Crosshouse, Ayrshire

In answer to your first question, yes I can: it was in Ludlow in the middle of 1988. On the whole, the less said about that, the better.

And that probably concludes the sexism debate. Unless anyone else has something new and dynamic to offer on the subject?
GK

NEXT MONTH

The next issue of ACE goes on sale on 4th May – make sure you don't miss out, because there will be another freebie on the cover and pages and pages of the latest news.

● Steve Cooke finally makes it back from Cornwall with his definitive guide to the evolution of Role Playing on computer. Read Part One of his in-depth overview.

● That Compact Disc Interactive feature in full - squeezed out this month by the news that the PC Engine is finally on sale over here. Learn what Cinemaware, Sierra Online and others think of the new medium for games.

● Plus the usual mix of reviews and opinions on the hottest software.

ACE ON THE ROAD AT MICROPROSE

Tetbury: a sleepy market town in the heart of Gloucestershire where American software house MicroProse set up their UK branch a couple of years ago.

Unlike many UK houses, MicroProse don't use any in-house programmers in this country. Many of their games are developed in the States, but others are contracted out to UK development houses: which brings us to some interesting news. MicroProse have employed Third Millennium, a division of Mike Singleton's Maelstrom, to work on a couple of games for them. Details remain sketchy, but one of the games will be set in an Arctic-like landscape. If Mike S's light-sourced 3D effects, which first appeared in *Whirligig*, are employed it seems likely that the graphics will be something special...

Arriving before the Third Millennium offerings is a game that marks something of a new departure for MicroProse: a coin-op conversion of the Bally game *Xenophobe*. "A what?" you cry. Yes, the simulation kings are producing a coin-op conversion. Whether it actually appears on the MicroProse label or on one of their two new labels is yet to be announced, but watch this space for an update on the situation and for the official announcement of the launch of the new labels.

The MicroProse testing area. This is where all the games are tested for bugs, playability and so on.

The MicroProse warehouse. Just up the road from their plush offices you can find a store full of row upon row of games, packages, labels, cuddly toys, electric toasters...

The art department of MicroProse, hard at work on some new dazzling visuals...

Another big release on the horizon is *UMS II*. The *Universal Military Simulator* first appeared on the ST over a year ago and proved to be a major step forward not only in wargaming, but also in demonstrating the potential of the then-new 16-bit machines. Now, after some wrangling, MicroProse are gearing up to launch the sequel in August or September. Although the system remains very much the same, this time the action will be on a global scale, with the player able to zoom in on specific battles anywhere in the world and so influence the global scene. More news nearer the time.

Due out at around the same time is a game with the working title *Rat Pack*. Martin Moth, MicroProse's PR manager, describes this as "a cross between *The Dirty Dozen* and *Airborne Ranger*" with several men to command and an overall objective to achieve. The player will issue orders to the men and leave the computer to control them, but will be able to jump in at any time and take control of any of the men should they need a hand.

Still on a military theme, MicroProse are currently working on an Abrams M1 tank simulator which promises to be as detailed and visually exciting as *F19*.

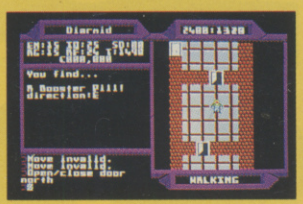
If you lean more towards the *Ultima* style of game you'll be pleased to learn of the imminent release of *Tangled Tales* and *Beyond 2400 AD*. *Tangled Tales* is more of a traditional RPG with plenty of puzzles and fighting involved, so sharpen your short sword and prepare to introduce it to a few trolls! *Beyond 2400 AD* leans towards arcade action and is slightly like *Gauntlet*, but with a few science fiction role-playing elements thrown in for good measure.

Due to the nature of their past games, MicroProse buyers are very loyal and this is one of the reasons the company are introducing their Combat Crew Club. Become a member and you'll get the chance to compete in player vs player competitions, take advantage of special offers on games, receive newsletters and loads of other goodies. A lucky few hundred members will also have the opportunity to receive special, personalised editions of some games.

Which just leaves the question of the much rumoured MicroProse console. "I don't know anything about a console" Martin assured us. And of course we believe every word he says.●

A NEW RANGE OF GOODIES FROM THE 'PROSE

***Beyond 2400 AD* on the PC. Down in the tube station.**

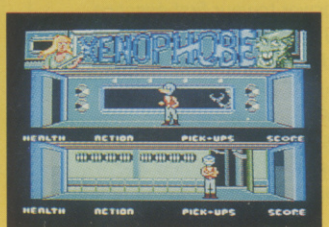


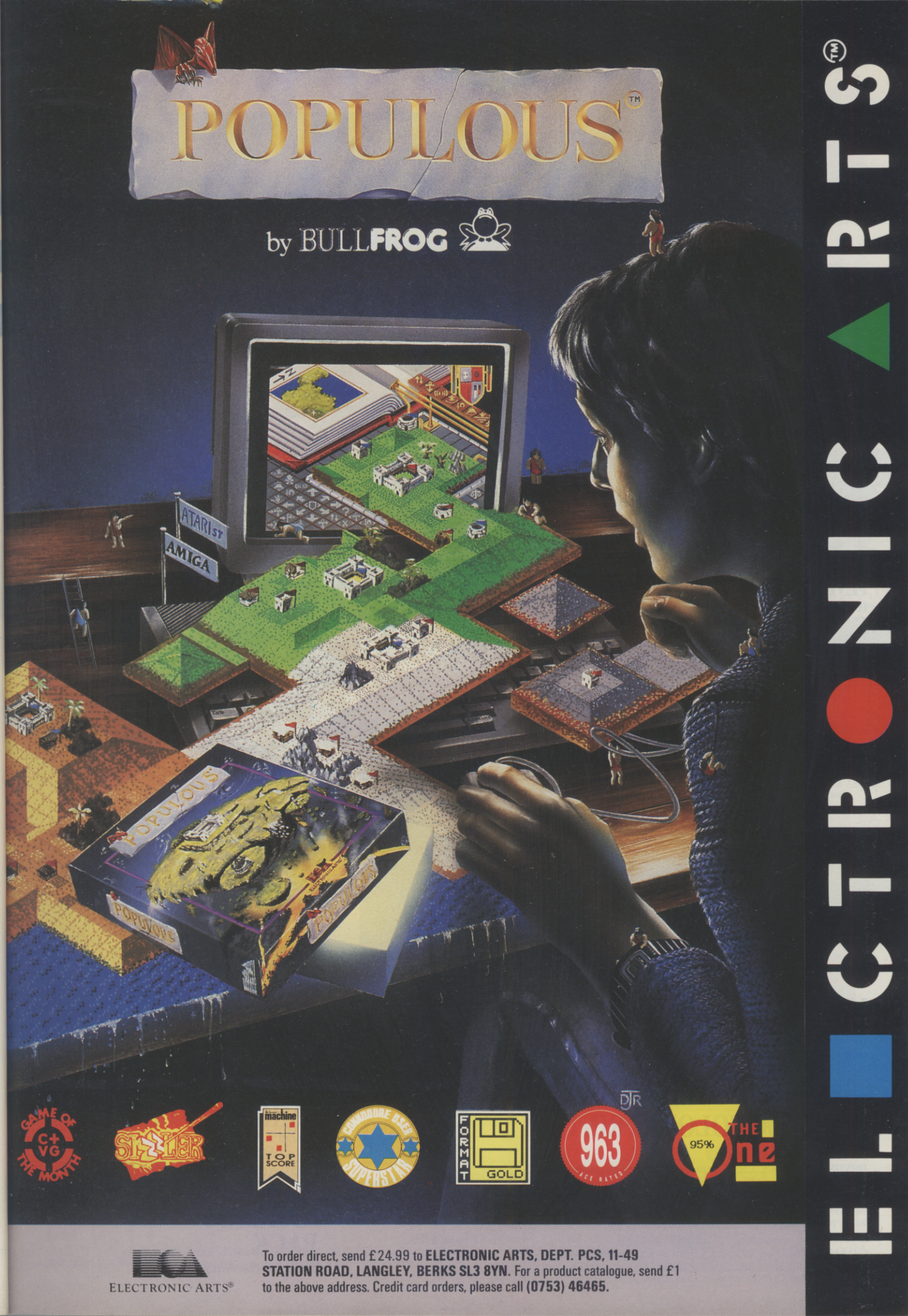
Wandering through *Beyond 2400 AD* on the PC.

(Right) A not-so-helpful character in *Tangled Tales* on the PC.

(Below) *Tangled Tales* on the PC. Prepare to do combat.

(Above) *Xenophobe*, 'Prose's first coin-op conversion, on the Amiga, and (Right) the Amstrad.

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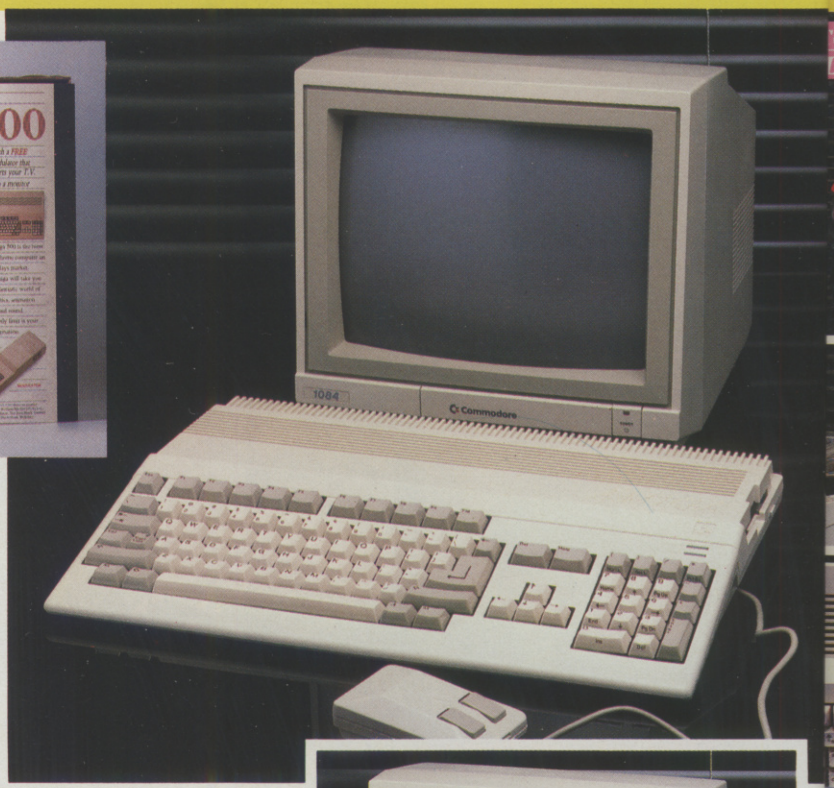

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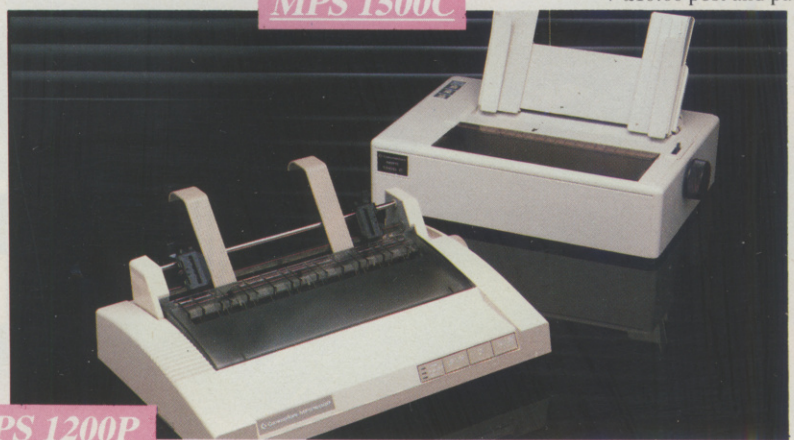

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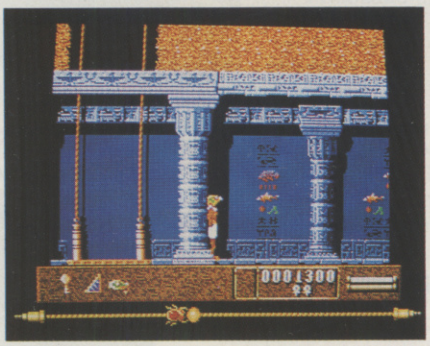
MAY DAZE

EYE OF HORUS
● Logotron

All those who thought that Denton Designs had fizzled out can rest assured that the Liverpool lads have been beavering away for the last couple of months on *Eye of Horus* for the ST, a two-way-scrolling arcade adventure set inside a pyramid. There's plenty of shooting, puzzling and exploring to be had, and anyone who doesn't like mapping shouldn't worry: the game does it for you.

ST – Horus enters one of the lower levels, using the rope lift on the left.



Amiga – *Blood Money* from Psgnosis. Decidedly more colourful than its predecessor.

BLOOD MONEY ● Psygnosis

Flushed with the success of *Menace* on the Psyclapse label, DMA Design are currently putting the finishing touches to the follow-up, entitled *Blood Money*. Set over four large levels, the shoot-em-up action of this sequel features alternate horizontal- and vertical-scrolling sections, plus simultaneous two-player combat. Amiga owners can expect a full review next issue; everyone else will have to wait a little while longer.

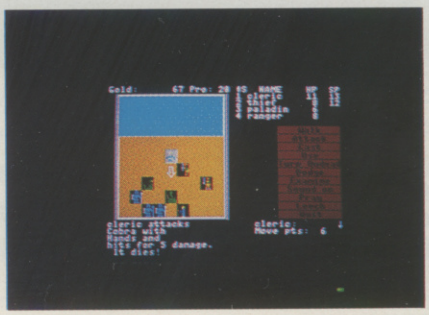
BIO-CHALLENGE ● Palace

This is the first release from French record company Delphine, distributed in this country under the auspices of Palace. Coded by the joint authors of Elite's *Space Harrier*, *Bio-Challenge* is a sort of strategic arcade shoot-em-up without the shooting. Over six multi-level regions, the player's android somersaults his way past a variety of strange creatures collecting ammunition for a show-down with each end-of-level guardian. ST and Amiga owners should prepare to commence battle some time in the next few weeks.

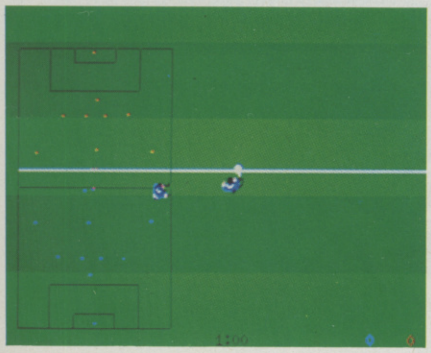
DEMON'S WINTER
● SSI

RPGers are in for a welcome addition to the genre with *Demon's Winter* from wargamers SSI. The quest is carried out in a similar fashion to previous offerings such as *Shard of Spring*, with a party of four characters being guided over a large map. Whenever hostiles are encountered, though, the map zooms in so hand-to-hand combat may be governed in more detail. Interested parties should seek out the ST and IBM versions any time now, with both Commodore versions appearing about a month later.

ST – Close-up of hand-to-hand combat.



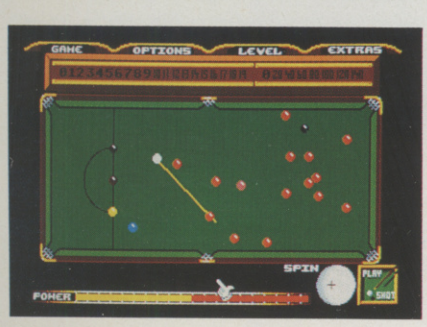
PREVIEWS



ST – Anco's new and very fast footy game. The large scanner to the left can be shrunk down if needed.

KICK OFF ● Anco

The current renaissance in footballing games continues with the imminent release of Anco's *Kick Off*. Taking the usual overhead view of the pitch, the game is unusual in that it features pseudo-full-screen scrolling (some clever raster timing going on here) and an on-screen 'radar' showing the relative positions of all 22 players. It's also very fast! ST owners can participate any day now, with Amiga and C64 users next in the queue. IBM, Spectrum and Amstrad versions are also in the pipeline.



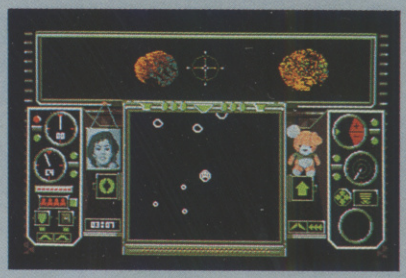
ST – 'The only thing it doesn't include is £60,000 prize money for the winner.

STEVE DAVIS WORLD SNOOKER ● CDS

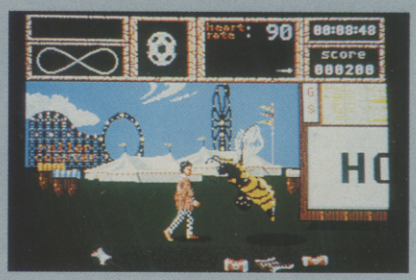
Fans of Steve 'Interesting' Davis should be well chuffed at the news of yet another snooker simulation bearing his moniker. Unfortunately, this uprated version of the earlier *Steve Davis Snooker* is only available on the larger machines due to memory restrictions.

SDWS includes snooker, billiards, pool and carom (no pockets), and boasts the digital talents of Steve Davis himself in solo player mode. ST and Amiga users can take on the champ when *SDWS* appears later this month.

MARS COPS ● Arcana



WEIRD DREAMS ● Rainbird



Just in case anyone was wondering what had happened to these two mega-projects, they're still in production – hence these two finished-looking screen shots. 16-bit owners should be prepared for a launch some time in the next month. Or so.

Delays have been caused by re-designs and a bad case of Motormouth.

STARBLAZE ● Logotron

Logotron's latest shoot-em-up has been designed by Mr Micro of Manchester, who wanted to employ some of their whizzo 3D routines developed during the production of 16-bit *Elite*. Enter *Starblaze*, in which the player is beset by hordes of spinning, shooting objects of alien design set against five different static backdrops. *Starblaze* is due for initial release on the ST, with an Amiga version to follow.

ST – On the third level, with the Alien mothership looming in the distance.

RAIDER ● Impressions

New label Impressions launch themselves onto the high software sea with *Raider*, a shoot-em-up cast in the mould shaped by *Gravitar*, *Thrust* and *Oids*. Destroy all the gun emplacements on each level and collect the cogwheel. Once four cogs have been beamed aboard, the ship is transported to a powerplant where the cogs must be correctly positioned within a strict time limit. Amiga owners can expect a full review issue next issue.

Amiga – Commodore owners with *Oids* envy should welcome Impressions' first release.

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EXTENDED PLAY

TURBO OUT RUN ● SEGA
Sega are still producing games based on their own monster smash driving game of a couple of years ago (*Power Drift* for example) so what better than an improved version of the original? Those of you who have been waiting for new courses and new challenges should climb into the cabinet pronto. Every bit as good as the first, it looks set to be another hit.

DOUBLE DRAGON II ● Technos
Subtitled *The Revenge*. More of the same classic beat-em-up action for one or two players. Horizontally scroll your way through hoards of baddies, letting loose with your vicious elbow chops!

Unnggh! That's put another guard out of action.

IKARI III ● SNK
Yet another follow-up to a classic. It's the same one or two player beat-em-up action as you control the two hunks of beef-cake out to rescue the Presidential Candidate's kidnapped child (guess when the idea for this one was thought up!) The graphics are good, the action's frantic and if you can't get enough of the other two try this one for size.

ASUKA AND ASUKA ● SNK
This has been a big hit in Japan, where the games-playing public just can't get enough of these vertically-scrolling shoot-em-ups with all the usual features: power ups, mid- and end-of-level guardians etc, etc. The difficulty tuning's just right on this one, making it highly addictive, so be warned.

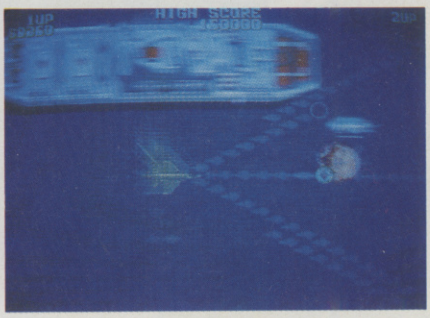
MISSING IN ACTION ● Konami
This Green Beret style horizontal-scroller is another big Japanese hit that promises to repeat its success over here. Run along the platforms, stab and shoot the enemy, collect the extra weapons from the guys dressed in red and ultimately rescue some POW's.

IRON MAN IVAN STEWART'S OFF ROAD ● Leland
Iron Man Ivan won a string of titles at off-road racing in cars, and so he's a fitting chap to endorse this cross between Atari's *Super Sprint* and Codemasters' *BMX Simulator*. Drive your car around the course (complete with bumps, dips and jumps), collect the money-bags that appear at random on the course and together with any prize money you get for finishing the race in a favourable position you can buy goodies including better tyres for cornering, better acceleration and higher top speed.

APACHE 3 ● Tatsumi
Take *Thunderblade* and put it in an *Afterburner* cabinet and you'll end up with a game called *Apache 3*. You fly a helicopter – viewed from behind – through stage after stage of enemy territory, destroying enemy aircraft and ground installations with your front-firing gun and missiles. Your 'copter is a little difficult to control but it's a fun game, though it does lack the variety of *Thunderblade*.

ARCADE ACE

Sequels are the flavour of the month in the arcades at the moment. Andy Smith checks out *Turbo Out Run*, *Double Dragon II* and *Ikari III*, and tells us what's new – either good or bad – on the scene.



WHIZZ ● Philko 30p

One or two players take to the skies in this horizontally-scrolling shoot-em-up. Each player commands a fighter plane, flying left to right across a continuously-scrolling terrain which changes after every two stages: first over sea, then above clouds with mountain peaks peering

(Left) Blasting through the first stage with three-way firing.

WHEELS RUNNER ● International Games 20p

With today's advances in technology – 32-bit processors, 26" monitors and the like – this looks like sómething of a throwback, and an unoriginal one too. Just a quick look at the screenshots will bring the Atari classics *Super Sprint* and *Championship Sprint* to mind, and that's pretty much what this game is.

One or two players can compete against each other and two computer-controlled drones to be the first to complete a set number of laps around a course. It's not quite that easy though, because each course changes slightly as you drive round it. For example, on the first stage there's a fork at the top of the screen. To start with, you follow the arrows and veer left. As the game progresses, a barrier suddenly appears over the left fork and the arrow switches indicating you should go to the right. Yet later it switches back again.

At random points in the race a large plane or helicopter flies over the screen and drops bonus points and fuel which you can collect by driving over. Finish first and you progress to the next race.

The graphics are poor for an arcade machine and the gameplay is very dated nowadays. Still, it's easy to play and for only 20p a throw you get a fair few minutes' worth.

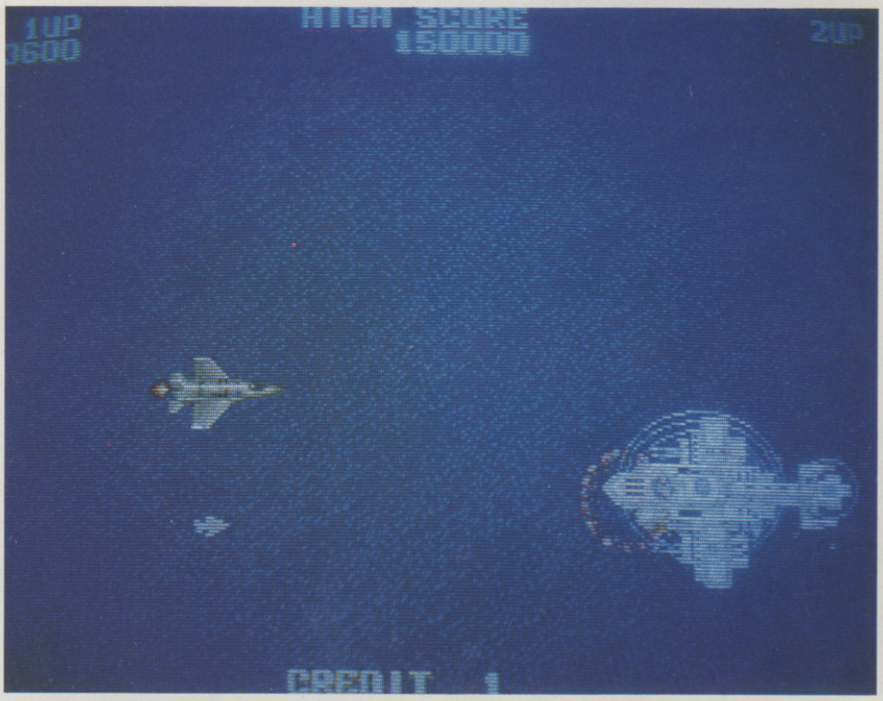
(Left) The first course – that airship just disappearing to the left of the screen has dropped a load of bonus points and fuel. (Above) Course Number Four – that red barrier sometimes disappears, allowing you to take a short cut.

(Right) Above the ocean, your plane comes up against the second stage end-of-level guardian. Prepare for battle – this fortified helicopter is not going going to fall easy prey to your guns and missiles.

through, then over land, and so on as the game progresses. Using front-firing guns and missiles, you attempt to destroy the enemy planes, boats and airships that come from all parts of the screen. The gun has a much faster firing rate and greater range than the missiles, but you can't destroy any ground targets – like gun emplacements on ships – with it, so to progress safely you have to keep pumping both buttons.

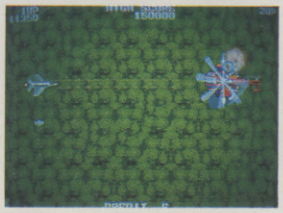
At the end of each stage lurks an end-of-level guardian (a giant helicopter in the first stage) which, surprisingly enough, must be destroyed to give access to the next stage. As you might imagine, the enemy gets tougher as you progress: planes start firing homing missiles at you, and missiles suddenly appear from the middle of the screen and scream towards your plane. Fortunately, as with most good shoot-em-ups, you can collect power-ups which greatly increase the fire-power available. Unfortunately, to grace your ship with this extra power, you have to collect the symbols left behind by various enemy craft. This is tougher than it sounds, because if the symbol is shot before it is collected it disappears: with so many enemy planes to confront, it can be all too easy to shoot the symbol by mistake.

Whizz is not a bad shoot-em-up. It is a touch too simple, and the graphics are not as exciting as some of the classier members of the genre, but it is moderately tough and reasonably addictive.



Stage Three and you have the benefit of three-way shots once again.

Still on Stage Three, this time with a different kind of three-way firing.



Having survived Stage Three, you confront the end-of-level guardian.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST ARCADE

There aren't many people who know more about the arcade scene than David Snook. He is, after all, Editor of the weekly paper Coin Slot International, which covers the whole industry from coin mechanisms to video machines. So there's no-one better to give us a report from the world's largest all-video arcade, Flashback in Hong Kong...

There are rumours of a bigger amusement arcade in Brazil, but the most famous giant arcade of them all is undoubtedly Flashback. Imagine the teeming millions in Hong Kong, pick out one of its busiest main street corners – next to Macdonalds – and any arcade owner would drool at the prospect.

That's what "Fat" Freddie Milner has at his disposal and, while it may not be the largest in the world (the Brazilian one is said to have loads of pinball machines), Freddie's is without doubt the largest all-video arcade.

The Mongkok area of Kowloon is the most densely-populated area on Earth and, hardly surprisingly, it's more like a disturbed anthill. Just off Nathan Road, in the basement next to the hamburger joint, lies the 11,000 square feet of Flashback. It contains 286 video games – nothing else. Pinballs, cranes and payout machines are all illegal in the colony.

Fat Freddie has an average attendance of 6,000 people every day with peak times just before public holidays and on Friday and Saturday nights. The all-time busiest day was Chinese New Year when 18,000 people jostled for a place in front of a screen and they had to close the front doors for fear of overcrowding, sudden panics or fights.

During 1988 the 10 top games were:

1. *RoboCop*,
2. *Chequered Flag*,
3. *Devastator*,
4. *P.O.W.*,
5. *Vindicator*,
6. *Sky Soldier*,
7. *DragonNinja*,
8. *Blasteroids*,
9. *Vigilante*,
10. *Xybots*.

And Fat Freddie gets them all before anyone else. As a partner in the Hong Kong based company Bondeal, Freddie buys and sells printed circuit boards – that's how most arcade games are sold these days, using PCB's into universal cabinets – and most of the world's main buyers deal with Bondeal at some time or other. It means he also gets first pick of anything new that comes onto the market and that makes Flashback even more important, because it's the world's testing ground.

Bondeal distributes a chart of its current top ten games, based on figures from Flashback, to many of the world's leading trade press for the coin-op business, including Coin Slot (UK), Replay (USA), Game Machine (Japan), Cash Box (Australia) and several Spanish trade magazines.

If you visit Flashback, make sure you've got plenty of time because it would take over 47 hours to spend 10 minutes at each machine! Imagine that at 30p per game, each lasting two minutes...

Commodore Amiga

The Knight one of three character classes.

Atari ST

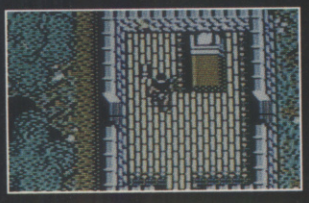
Converse through simple commands and menus.

DISCOVER AN ARCADE ADVENTURE WITH HIDDEN DEPTHS

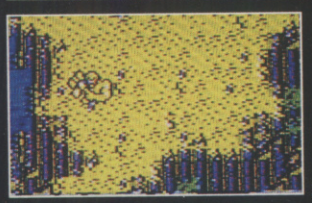
Discover Times Of Lore, Origin's first adventure on cassette. Acclaimed British designer Chris Roberts has taken the best of arcade and adventure – fast and furious combat, stunning graphics and animation, unrelenting danger and challenge – and introduced the depth of a classic fantasy role playing game.

Entirely joystick driven, Times Of Lore continuously tests your combat skills while you gradually become involved in a compelling plot. With 13,000 screen locations, a powerful but easy-to-use menu and icon interface, scores of interactive characters and music by Martin Galway, it ventures further than other arcade adventures.

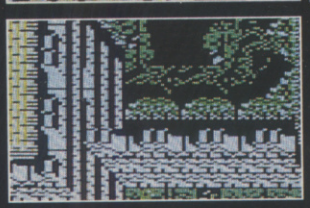
Origin have broken new ground in Times Of Lore. Isn't it time you did too? Available for: C64/128 Cassette £9.95, Disk £14.95, Spectrum 48/128K Cassette £9.95, Spectrum +3 Disk £14.95, Amstrad 464/6128 Cassette £9.95, Disk £14.95, Atari ST £24.95, IBM/PC & Compatibles £24.95, Apple £19.95, Commodore Amiga £24.95.



C64/128



Spectrum



Amstrad

Journey through an immense world of cities, dungeons, and a stunning variety of natural terrain.

ORIGIN

Origin, MicroProse, 2 Market Place, Tetbury, Glos, GL8 8DA. Tel: 0666 54326

DON'T YOU FORGET

You probably noticed that there was an audio cassette on the cover of this issue. Well, now would be a good time to set up your stereo and have a listen to your free tape – it was specially prepared to be used with this feature.

Side B contains a full-length recording of a tune created using the Atari ST and Steinberg's Pro 24 sequencer, while Side A contains a step-by-step account of how the tune was created. Listen and learn!

If you have any problems listening to your cassette – and don't try to load it into a computer, eh? – send it off to:

ACE RETURNS, Spool Data Ltd, First avenue, Deeside Industrial Park, Clwyd CH5 2NU.

THE AUDIO TAPE

MUSIC

Some things in life have the knack of surrounding themselves with unwarranted mystique: you can only approach them, it seems, after years of painstaking study and labour. With computers and music you have two of the biggest 'ivory tower' subjects linked together. So this makes it totally inaccessible, right? Wrong. Given the right computer, the right software, and maybe even a musical instrument or two thrown in, even the most musically or technically illiterate can have a stab at sounding something like proficient. Our new Music Editor, Jon Bates, explains how.

To show how easy it all can be, let me give you some examples from real life. A certain well-known high-flying computer programmer and very successful columnist has gained many hours of serious and savage amusement from musical add-ons to his computers. He has, on occasion, phoned me up to find out what the black keys on an instrument keyboard are for and which end plays the higher notes. See what I mean about musical illiteracy? This guy can't work out the keyboard, let alone read music, but his tapes are very enjoyable and musical. **Point One. You don't need to be a musical prodigy to get a satisfactory result from a musical computer system.**

On the other hand, I offer myself as the exact opposite. I have been reviewing music software for some years now and am considered a passable player on the old ivories (especially by those whose drinks bill I have stood). Program a computer? You must be joking. I wouldn't know where to start. **Point Two. You don't need to be a computer freak to get to grips with the sounds.**

Anecdote Number Three concerns a certain quasi-Acid House chart artist who has just chalked up his third Top Ten hit success in about six months. I have it on excellent authority that his dexterity is now no better than it was when he was fifteen – that of an arthritic chimp. In fact he's still using the riffs that my mate taught him at youth club. How come? He's got the right software and hardware. **Point Three. You don't really need to know a lot about either computers OR music.**

So how can you make music with a computer? Well, as you will discover in the following pages, there are essentially only two ways to make a computer work musically. The first; get it to control an electronic musical instrument, such as a synthesizer, and play music through the instrument. The second; use the sound chip inside the computer, and play music straight from the machine.

THE FIRST OPTION

GET THE COMPUTER TO CONTROL AN ELECTRONIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENT, SUCH AS A SYNTHESIZER...

CONTROLLING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Modern electronic instruments, such as synthesisers, employ very much the same technology as computers, so it's an obvious step to utilise the processing power of the computer to organise music created on these instruments. The initial problem is to persuade the computer to communicate with musical instruments, or with any of the other gadgetry common in modern music.

Fortunately, some years ago a bunch of the major synthesizer manufacturers in the world got together with a similar idea in mind. Although they had quickly discovered that the ability to connect one synthesizer to another was incredibly useful, they had progressed to the point where all their instrument communications systems were contradicting one another and the all-important sales figures were descending rapidly. Thus it was that MIDI – Musical Instrument Digital Interface – was born. MIDI turned out to be a life-saver. From about 1984, pretty well any instrument worth serious consideration has MIDI ports fitted on the back. So, too, does the Atari ST – and simple add-ons provide MIDI communications for all other computers, as explained in the "Setting up at Home" section of this article on page 30.

In outline, MIDI allows the notes of music, the sound of those notes, and all other information concerning the sound of the music when played by an instrument, to be turned into a common code and transferred in real time to another instrument. Since the information that is being transfered is in digital form, a logical step is to put a computer in the chain. Not only can the computer act as a storage device, holding the data in memory, but it can also be used to display and edit the information, and so give the user the ability to change or re-organise the music that it represents.

As a consequence, there are two ideal uses for a computer in the MIDI music chain. **Firstly**, it can act as a **sequencer**: a device that stores and plays back performance data much in the manner of a tape recorder. In this role, it can be used to alter the structure of the music, changing individual notes, changing when the notes are played, and replacing or repeating whole sequences of notes. **Secondly**, it can control the sounds that the notes represent: when a key is pressed on a synth, it can make almost any sound you want, and these sounds are known as **voices**. The computer can create entirely new sounds to program into the synth directly, or can store sounds, thereby acting as a sound library for the synth.

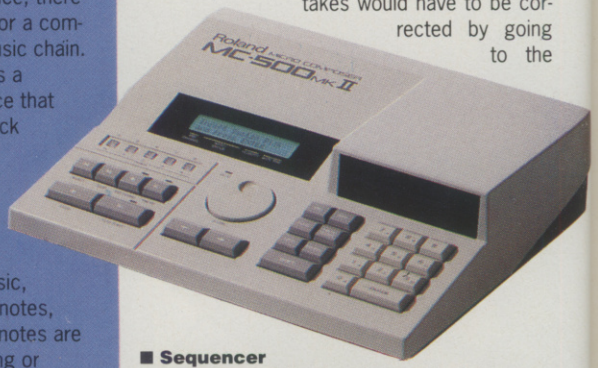
SEQUENCER: THE COMPUTER AS SOUND ORGANISER

***The Sequencer*: a device used to store, play back, edit and re-organise music...**

Without the sequencer, there would be a considerable difference to the music produced and written now. There are dedicated stand-alone music sequencer devices but for our purposes we are talking about the software that turns the computer into one.

The basic function of a typical sequencer is to act very much in the manner of a cassette recorder: you can record, say, the chords to your piece by pressing a 'record' icon, then play it back. Better still, it can act like a multi-track recorder: while you are hearing the first track, you can back-record another instrument, say a bass line, on a separate track. Because MIDI can distinguish between 16 channels of separate musical information it can not only distinguish between the chords and the bass line, which are assigned to separate channels, it can also play each track on a separate synth set to receive on the appropriate channel.

If we were using a multi-track tape recorder instead of our sequencer any mistakes would have to be corrected by going to the beginning of the track and starting the bungled track all over again. Even one note out of place could ruin the track. OK – maybe you should practise a bit more, so you don't play bum notes. But if you are using a sequencer, and the faults are not too severe, then even the most basic software will let you dive into the data and correct the offending notes. How the program does this depends on its degree of sophistication, which in turn is relative to how much you have coughed up for the package.



■ **Sequencer encounters of the hardware kind: the Roland MC-500 mk 2 Micro Composer.**

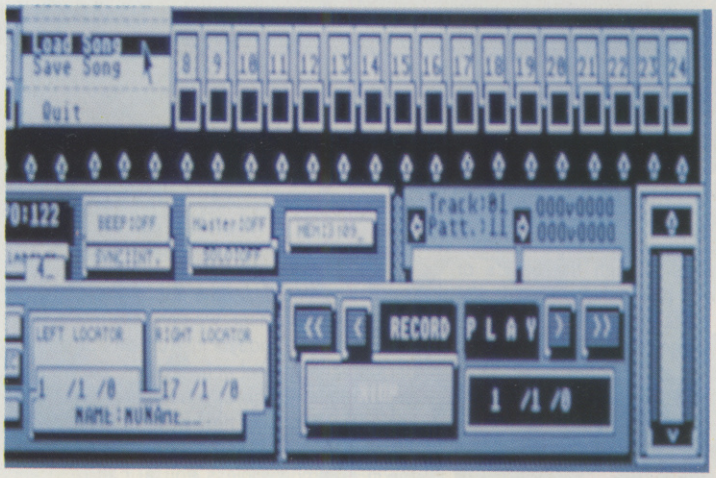
There are many ways to display this information. Often a form of moving bar graph is used, usually aligned with a displayed data stream as well. At the top end of the market is a display option that shows your piece in traditional music notation; but for that you have to start talking serious money.

The basic display, though, is usually a string of numbers that relate to the notes

played set against the bar and beat number. Suppose you found out that your blunder was in Bar 7. Flip through the string of notes until you get to Bar 7 and look through the data. It might look like this:

Bar	Beat	Note On	Velocity	Duration
7	1.00	C3	64	96
7	1.00	E3	64	81
7	1.00	F#3	64	11
7	1.12	G3	64	75

Each line of the display represents an individual note. Since a chord is a group of notes played at the same time, all these notes have been played on the same beat, numbered 1.00. A quick look at this tells me that I have clocked an incorrect F# and tried to slide to G so that you wouldn't notice. Wrong. It sounds lousy. But how do I know this? Well, with the benefit of musical training, I know that the chord I want is a C chord and that F# is unwanted here. If I wasn't too sure I can scroll through the notes individually and, since we are in edit mode, it should sound them out on the synth – then it would become obvious, even without a knowledge of chords. Also, look at the length (duration) of the notes. That F# is suspiciously short. Coupled with the fact that the correct note, G, occurs later at 1.12 I think I have located the problem. By the way, the beats are usually subdivided for pinpoint accuracy: in this case each beat is subdivided into 96 pieces.



■ Recording and editing music using *Steinberg Pro 24* sequencer software on the Atari ST. Note the icons for record, play cue and review, exactly the same as an ordinary tape recorder.

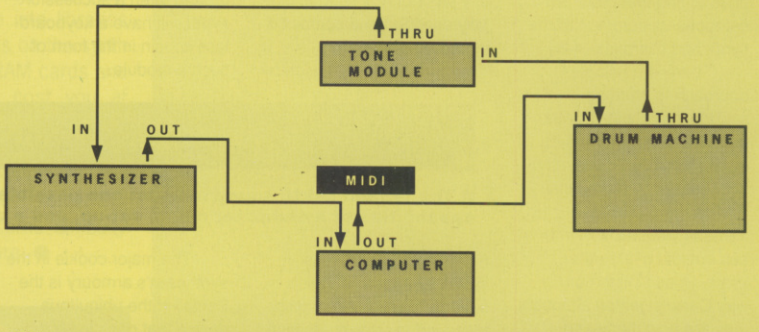
Depending on the facilities made available to me by the software, I can either simply knock out the offending note and the following notes will shuffle up to close up the gap, or I have to adjust the time and note value individually. One more thing. You will notice that the Velocity readings are all the same at 64. This would indicate that I have been using a non-touch-sensitive synthesizer – they always output at a level of 64. If I had been using a touch-sensitive keyboard (one where the volume of the note is controlled by how hard you hit the key) all these values would have been different from one another.

In even the most basic of sequencers there is one other facility. Quantize. Suppose my playing had been a bit suspect. The notes were correct but not at the right time – say the chord was played at about 1.30 instead of 1.00. No problem. Look for the quantize button and set it to round up all notes to the nearest whole beat. This will shuffle the chord back to

MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface)

The international communication language of digital musical instruments. It was born at the beginning of the 1980s as the switch over from analogue synths to digital synths was under way. Manufacturers had tried to market their own individual interface systems in the '70s and come up against one major problem. The sales of instruments dropped since no-one was willing to commit themselves to one brand or even one type of synth. In effect you were buying instant obsolescence. Hence the need for the Musical Instrument Digital Interface.

The international agreement meant that although there was complete communication on common ground such as notes, pitch-bend, timing pulse and other things that synths and drum machines have, there was room for manufacturers to develop their own individual communication systems as well – known as the Systems Exclusive part of the code. This can transmit maybe voice data, drum patterns or any other set-up peculiar to a particular type of instrument. This is what enables voices to be programmed from a computer.



MIDI sequencing system using the synth as master inputting keyboard and the computer as sequencer/controller of synth, drum machine and tone module. Notice the 'daisy chain' effect using the 'thru' MIDI ports.

The bottom line is that MIDI is a very well established communication language with several levels of sophistication. It means too that instead of throwing away your old gear you just add to it. It transmits information on up to sixteen separate channels – in theory this means that you can control up to sixteen instruments or devices independently. Each channel is identified by a channel flag, and each receiving instrument is set to pick up information with the correct channel flag as its header. So a bass line might be on channel one, chords on channel two, drum program on channel three and melody on channel four – the four receiving synths will play their independent parts and the result should be the complete track.

The fashion nowadays is heading towards common file compatibility. In other words if you record a sequence on one piece of software it can be stored in a MIDI file format that can be loaded into another sequencer directly. Other compatibility goals are ones that enable any sample to be stored in MIDI sample dump format and thus reloaded onto a different sampler but hopefully recreating the same sound.

There are also programs that will transfer files from one format to another – e.g. DX7 sounds to a sampler, MIDI sample files to Amiga IFF format and vice versa. There are plans afoot to create a video synchronizing MIDI code that will work in software only and thus do away with the expensive hardware now needed.

As well as the instrument and computer being fully conversant, MIDI is finding its way onto other pieces of equipment, such as sound processors – those devices that alter the sound to add reverb, echo, and many other 'whizz bang' effects (known in the trade simply as 'FX'). Thus FX can be switched on and off from a sequencer just as quickly as sounds can be changed on a synthesizer. Useful, especially if you have a multiple FX unit which can only do one effect at a time, which is common at present.

You can expect to see MIDI on more and more mixing desks in the future – at the moment it is an expensive business – and this will mean mixing sounds will be a semi-automated process both live and in the home studio. Great! You can return after a period of time to the mix of your track without having to reset every button: MIDI will transmit the settings to the desk and alter them as the track is playing.

In the article on the Archimedes based sound to light unit – 'The Bit Bopper'– as features in the March edition of ACE, it was interesting to notice that MIDI was used to shift vast quantities of data at high speed from one computer to another. Speed freaks will know that MIDI data travels at 31.5k bits per second.

1.00. Fine. In practice, the quantize figure is set by the value of the shortest note you want in that particular track.

OK. So we know how to knock out the duff notes using the sequencer's editing capabilities. The remaining genius of the sequencer lies in building up a piece of music by looping and repeating selected sections of your dabblings and then organising them into some sort of shape. The cassette mounted on this month's front cover goes through the basics of building up a piece in this fashion. The idea of being able to pick parts out and repeat them is responsible for a large amount of the chart material heard today, and also a certain Monsieur JM Jarres' wealth...

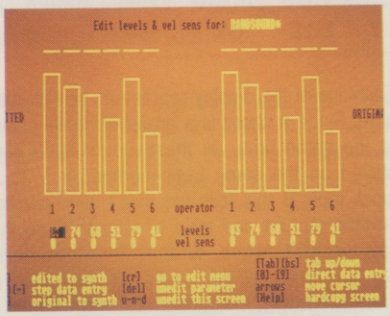
PDS

Goodman, Softville, and Floppyshop ST, PD libraries carry a proficient 32 track Canadian MIDI sequencer which, for the price of the disk, is an absolute steal.

VOICING: THE COMPUTER AS SOUND GENERATOR

A Voice: any sound that the synthesizer can produce when the keyboard is played...

So, having dealt with the use of the computer as a music organiser, we can take a look at its use in voicing. Today's instruments are a wonderful technological achievement. Each month brings a new batch of products onto the market, often heralding new ways of creating and re-creating sound. Sadly they all have one factor in common. Unless you a) can read very small things, b) have a phenomenal memory for figures, and c) are turned on by migraines, you will have great difficulty in getting the best out of them in terms of creating new sounds. Even the most expensive instruments have only a two-line 24-character LCD in which you can try and flip from one part of the sound to



Atari ST – Editing one aspect of a voice, displayed as a bar graph.

SYNTHS, SAMPLERS, INSTRUMENTS

The idea of sounds created by means other than acoustic was first mooted in the 1870's and the first synth was built in 1905. Since it weighed about two hundred tons it was not exactly for humping from gig to gig. As the technology increased in power and decreased in size so the instruments kept pace: first with the transistor, then the integrated circuit. The first commercially-available synths were marketed in the mid-1960s thanks to one Robert Moog. The 1970s saw a rapid expansion of the synth market, with the arrival of drum machines and sequencers.

However, these were all analogue machines – they all used electricity directly to create and manipulate sound. The development and cheapness of the digital processor lead to a radical rethink and revolution in synths and the digital age was born at the turn of this decade. It comes as no surprise to find that there are components common to the synth and micro internally.

There is no single approach to creating sounds digitally. If you like, each manufacturer has it's own 'brand name' of synthesis. Frequency Modulation (FM) is the province of Yamaha whose DX7 synth has outsold every other synth. Phase Distortion was Casio's gambit although they are now marketing a type called Vector Synthesis. Until recently, Roland used a hybrid method whereby sounds were created by analogue means but controlled and stored digitally. They hit back at the market by using Linear Arithmetic synthesis. In simple terms this uses very tiny parts of real sounds digitally encoded and combined in various patterns.

This principle is also used by Kawai but called 'Cross Wave' synthesis. All this sounds brainstorming, palpitation inducing stuff. As indicated elsewhere though, with the right software it all becomes very simple: simply a matter of trying out sound shapes on screen until something emerges.

Apart from the synth equipped with keyboard et al, there is the Tone Module. This is what is known as a 'Multi-Timbral' device – capable of producing several sounds at the same time, with each sound assigned to a separate MIDI channel. Here the addition of a voicing program makes setting these a much easier proposition especially when it comes to stacking all the sounds up with varying volumes and sensitivity. Tone Modules are a space-saving addition to any existing set-up and often a successful synth will have a keyboardless cousin in the form of such a module.

■ The Roland D-110 sound module: one possible way to expand the sound capabilities of a computer music set-up, and a useful space-saver.

The major cookie in the synthesist's armoury is the Sampler: the ubiquitous device that does to sound what a video digitizer does to an image. Having sliced the sound up at a rate of up to 40,000 times a second, the sampler will let you edit any or all of the sound, reverse, loop and generally stand it on its head. Here Amiga owners can smirk away to their hearts' content, safe in the knowledge that the Amiga can not only play back and manipulate samples with ease but at the same time run sequencing software. Multi-tasking programs that are capable of this and quite a bit more are just heaving themselves into view and ACE has been having a few sneak previews. There will more in depth facts on these in future issues. Suffice to say that for the Amiga the *Music X* program from Activision looks like setting an industry standard.

Although there is sampling available for the ST and other computers, for the real serious business of sound creating you will need to purchase a separate dedicated sampling unit. Prepare your credit card for some serious damage as even the most humble sampler will set you back about £750 and the well-tried and tested Akai range will come in at about £1750 plus. If you want even more power you will have to shell out at least double that figure for PPG Waveterms and E-Max samplers.

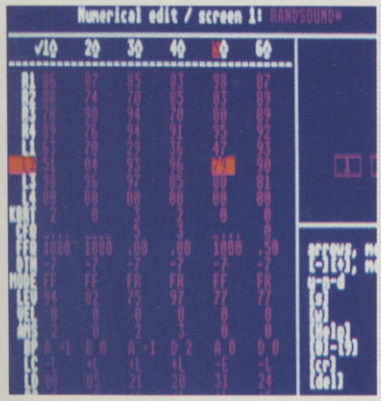
Without delving too much into the technical side, the things to look for are a fast sampling rate of up to about 40K, at least 12-bit data handling and some smart editing facilities. It goes without saying that additional friendly software is a welcome bonus when it comes to forming the sounds and personally I would be very loath to touch a sampler that wouldn't handle MIDI sample dump format.

However, a humbler start to sampling on your computer could set you back as little as £35.

■ The Akai S1000 sampler: can an Amiga do the same job?

another. As there can be up to a hundred variable factors which go to make up a sound, this is putting the quart into a pint pot with a vengence. Couple this with a few wild cards like, for instance, stacking eight separate sounds together to make a particular 'patch' for a tone module and you will swear blind that water torture is a pleasurable alternative.

But by using the appropriate voicing software for the instrument you can graphically see the shapes of the sound on your screen.



Atari ST – Editing a sound by using voicing software. This time the information is in numerical form.

With any half-decent software you can redraw the shape and tone of the sound. You can hear your results instantly, usually without having to replay the instrument, and can compare them with the original version which is stored in a temporary buffer.

The voicing programs also have another money- and labour-saving facility. You can save all the sounds you create into libraries not unlike a data base. To do this on the synth may well mean shelling out on RAM cards and cartridges which will certainly cost you at least the same as a decent voicing program – about £35 upwards. The programs are available for most synths and tone modules and samplers, although if you have something obscure you might encounter some difficulty in getting hold of suitable software. ●

PDS

Softville have some synth programming software for the DX 100 and CZ101 which works reasonable well and will generate ad hoc voices for you to finish off. All three ST PD libraries have internal voice programming software. I would tend to avoid the demo versions of professional packages which are on offer as they usually cannot store anything you create and, although fascinating to use are, in the final analysis, about as much use as a chocolate fire engine. The Amiga is also well catered for; Softville and the Amiga User group have a similar pattern of software to the ST but of course the sounds from the Amiga will be far superior. The PC market, although prolific, has far less music software available other than internal chip programmers.

THE SECOND OPTION; USE THE INTERNAL CHIP TO PRODUCE ITS OWN SOUNDS...

THE SECOND OPTION

USING THE INTERNAL SOUND CHIP

At first, the tunes and effects that computers generated were banal to say the least. Until the rise of the specialist music programmer. Armed with his carefully-guarded and usually self-written 'player program', the games music programmer has been able to turn the internal chip on its head. However, these programs are not commercially available and will, in all probability, never be. They are usually immensely complex and would need a good deal of simplification so that the average bod could get anything from them.

For us mere mortals with no knowledge of machine code or the internal workings of sound chips, the only way to gain access to the internal chip is via a simple and straightforward equivalent of the professional's player program. The quality of this program and the facilities available through it very much depend on the type of chip the machine uses.

In fact, there are not that many internal music chips around. The most popular is a direct descendant from the first generation of arcade games. It is the AY 8912 (or closely numbered relative) made by Texas Instruments. This chip, which I personally loathe, has seen the insides of many a computer. To whit, the BBC, Amstrad CPC, IBM PC, Atari ST, Spectrum 128, MSX, Dragon; the list goes on. There were even bolt-on boxes containing this chip for the musically moronic Spectrum 48 with its woeful 'beep' command. However for each of the aforementioned machines there are programs about that allow you, the user, to play around with its capabilities: three channels of sound, any of which could be chosen to generate noise.

More adequate was the Commodore 64 which had a specially designed SID chip. The sound was a little more varied, with four channels to go at, and the filters, those devices that clean up the sound, were certainly more effective. Hence the games had much better soundtracks. The real breakthrough with the C64 came with the realisation that real digitized sound (sampled) could be stored and played back through the chip. However the memory limitations tended to cramp the style of the programmers although the advantages to the average user came in the form of rather neat drum programs, that don't take up too much space in memory.

Perhaps the best computers around at present for making music internally are the Amiga and the Archimedes. Both these machines have specialist, custom-designed music chips. The Amiga is ahead on points, probably because of its transatlantic origin and slightly longer time in the market place. The chip, intriguingly named Paula, is a stereo chip that is very adept at playing back sampled sounds. So a program that has a library of sounds to go at, and that is capable of using those sounds to create a tune will sound pretty good. The Amiga stores its sound in a common IFF format, which means that they can be used by another Amiga program.

The specs for the Archimedes are even better. An eight-channel internal chip, a similar ability to play back sampled sounds with good fidelity, but with the added advantage of being able to handle more sounds simultaneously. As yet, though, there are few programs on the ground for the Archie.

Using the internal chip, although has its limitations, also provides a good lead into the world of music and the micro. It is certainly the cheapest start, since many music programs are available in the form of Public Domain Software. And it is also the most painless, requiring no investment in extra hardware, interfaces or instruments. ●

PDS

The most amusing are the sample players. Usually for the ST or Amiga, these play back sampled tunes. I am not sure that I would really want my ST to blurt out Bon Jovi, but if this is uppermost on your list of things to achieve, then don't let me stop you. More fun comes with the *Star Trek* program available from Goodman PDL, who are ST specialists. I quite enjoyed the various quotes from the series, including the opening 'Space, the final frontier', 'All phasers locked on target', etc.

A BRIEF ROUND-UP OF WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED, AND WHAT'S AVAILABLE FOR YOUR MACHINE.

STARTING OUT AT HOME

SETTING UP AT HOME: WHAT YOU NEED

Oddly enough, not a lot of space. It's amazing what you can cram into 6' by 8' with a little thought. The most important items you will need are a decent set of speakers. You can improve even the most moderate (as in rubbish) sound system by shopping for a large and decent set of speakers. There are many names to conjure with but look out for; Kef, Celestion, Wharfdale, Tannoy to name but a few. If you have to work late at night then the same would apply to a decent set of headphones.

For amplification, a decent domestic hi-fi amp will do provided that it can take an 'aux' input. This would be much better than a stage amplifier, which is quite noisy when you get up close. Next item on the shopping list is a mixer. Don't go too low-budget here, as the cheaper ones tend to add lots of noise. Finally, something to preserve your efforts on. You could go for a decent cassette recorder, and if distributing copies of your efforts is one of your goals then a twin cassette deck is preferable. However you can combine the mixer and recorder if you wish by purchasing one of the many multi-track cassette recorders. Although Amstrad do have a unit on the market that professes to do all that I have mentioned above, it is inherently noisy and has no way of getting rid of it – in other words it has no Dolby or DBX noise reduction systems, which are essential in any home recording system. Finally, you will need a computer, maybe an MIDI interface, and an instrument or two.

COMPARISON OF COMPUTERS: HOW THEY SHAPE UP MUSICALLY

SPECTRUM

Internally not too well, although the 128K version has the three-channel chip and rather redundant MIDI out via the RS 232 port.

As far as MIDI goes, there are a fair amount of interfaces floating about although no-one actually makes them any more. Look out for the Ram/Flare Music Machine, the XRI interface and the Cheetah interface. The software is not compatible from interface to interface and probably the best bet is the Music Machine. However you are usually restricted to 48K and cassette loading and, although there is smart software about, it does require patience. But as a low-cost entry into the MIDI market the Spectrum is probably without parallel. Interested parties could contact the newly formed Spectrum Music Group on 05242 62258.

BBC

Similar story to the Spectrum. Internal three-channel chip with not much in the way of useful playing programs about nowadays. MIDI catered for even less. Perhaps the only company still selling MIDI soft- and hardware for it are EMR who can be contacted on 0702 335747. Only 32K to go at in memory terms but it could have the advantage of a disk drive. One anomaly in this is the UMI2B, a ROM based program that was quite a successful MIDI sequencing package. Look out also for the bolt-on Acorn 500 and 5000 music packages from Hybrid Technology. They are quite innovative but lacking in MIDI and should come in at a price well under £100 now.

COMMODORE 64

Improved internal sound chip with one or two non-MIDI music programs still lurking on market stalls. Nobody making any MIDI soft- or hardware seriously nowadays. However, bargain bucket goodies can be had if you look out for Steinberg Pro 16, Island Music System, Joreth Music software, Sonus C64 sequencer. There are only a few interfaces available. There was an attempt to make an industry standard interface by adopting the SIEL interface. Sadly this Italian-based company went to the wall some years ago and so it is to the second-hand columns that your efforts are to be directed. The C64 is quite adept at handling samples and one or two programs existed that used this facility – the Microvox being one of them.

MSX

Good if you get the Yamaha CX5 which boasts a multi-timbral FM internal chip, plus MIDI ports and some very good cartridge-based software for it. No longer made but a very good and comprehensive entry into music if you don't want to seriously use it for anything else. Problem is that the disk drive was very expensive so a lot of them are cassette storage only. However it is an excellent addition to an existing system, costing under £200 second-hand.

AMIGA

Needs MIDI interface for communication with the outside world. No compatibility problems and the Datel interface which costs £45 is about as good as any. Excellent internal chip and data handling specifications. Watch out for superior software in the very near future. I suspect that it could well rival the ST on the home front, not only for sampling capabilities and sonic superiority. Even now, most software dealers carry a variety of sequencing packages for it.

ST

No software problems thanks to the on-board MIDI ports. It is well established, especially in the professional user end. Software starts at about £35 and stops at about £500. Possibly the most versatile MIDI computer about, but not so hot on the sampling. You can't sequence and sample at the same time, however.

PC

Problems with interfaces. The industry standard interface, the Roland MPU401, costs about £250, so it is hardly bargain of the century. Cheaper interfaces will not run software other than that written for it. Although a worthy computer in its own right, it is not really a good starting point for budding musicians. The internal chip is the same as the BBC. However, if this is what you have inherited then save for the interface; there is quite a lot of software of all types that will run on it.

ARCHIMEDES

Software still in development stage, most of it from EMR. However, the internal sound chip is excellent and theoretically it should be able to outstrip the Amiga. Acorn sell a MIDI interface for it and as this is the only one about there are no compatibility problems. If the product as a whole takes off, the music facilities will be a force to be reckoned with. Watch with interest at the moment though.

SAM

This one is so new I haven't even seen it. The rumours are that it can cope with all the Spectrum software and if it can also deal with the hardware bolt-ons then, MIDI wise, this could also be an outside contender with some very cheap software already available. The internal chip specs look good with six-channel stereo on offer and there is a 16-track MIDI sequencer already on the planning bench from MGT.

CPC

Limited MIDI software and our horrible friend, the three-channel AY 8910 sound chip on board. EMR still have some MIDI software available. Not really a serious machine for the avid muso, but still capable if this is your machine. ●

PUBLIC DOMAIN SOFTWARE

Possibly the cheapest and easiest entry into the world of music via your computer. For a paltry fee, which is usually around £3 per disk, you can get software of several varieties.

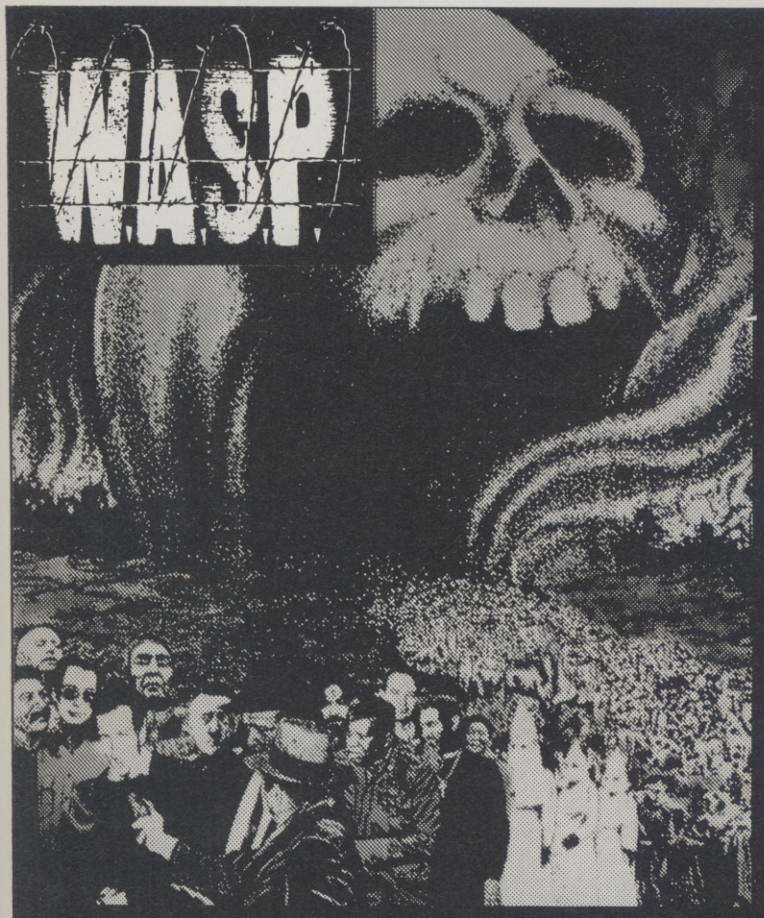
Contact

Floppyshop ST	0224 691824
UK Amiga Users	0533 550993
Softville	0705 266509
Goodman PDL	0782 335650

THE LAST WORD

This has been an overview of the musical possibilities of your computer. Let's hope it has given you some insight into what you can do with your machine for quite a modest outlay. Next month will see some in-depth reviews of sequencing and voicing software, plus a good look at some of the synths and tone modules that represent a good addition to any home system. As the new boy here behind the ACE music desk I would welcome any letters, problems etc. you may have. I'll do my level best to sort them out and get your name in print.

In future issues I will be reviewing all aspects of computer music making and recording. After all it IS very **ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT**.



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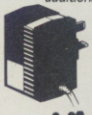

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Mirrorsoft, Commodore and Cinemaware join forces to offer the ultimate prize - the first CD ROM game for the PC AND the hardware to play it on!

Last month we told you how Mirrosoft and Cinemaware worked together to produce a new version of *Defender of the Crown* – a version that runs on a CD ROM drive. A specially produced stereo soundtrack enhances the experience of waging territorial war in Saxon England, and a narrator explains what is taking place. The CD ROM *Defender* sells for £50, but then you'd need an EGA PC to run it, as well as a new-generation CD ROM drive that can provide audio output to your stereo.

Not many people own that sort of computer hardware. The total bill for such a set-up would be at least £1,500, but soon you could be the proud owner of the ultimate computer system, courtesy of ACE and two forward-looking companies who are already producing the hardware and software of the future: Commodore and Mirrorsoft. Everyone knows that Commodore produce the C64 and Amiga, but did you realise that they also manufacture a range of IBM PC compatible machines?

Cinemaware are about to release their next interactive movie entertainment – *Lords of the Rising Sun* – which is the follow-up to *Defender of the Crown* in terms of gameplay. *Lords* features a much-improved game design that sets the player the task of taking control of the islands that make up Japan in the days when it was ruled by warlords. Strategy is combined with arcade sequences in the quest to become the leader of the most powerful force in the land – and of course the usual glossy Cinemaware graphics complete the package.

Cinemaware are currently putting the final touches to this, their latest interactive movie, and twenty copies are on offer to the runners-up in this prize-laden extravaganza.

The Hitachi CDR 1503S – some £750 worth of advanced technology. The drive can be linked to a PC and used to load data from CD ROM, but it also doubles as an audio CD Player. Plug the drive into your HiFi as well as your PC and you can play *Defender of the Crown* with an orchestral soundtrack in full stereo – or switch the PC off and 'relax' to the latest Bon Jovi CD, if that is your musical taste...

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ENTRY FORM

1) Name four computers produced by Commodore.

2) Name four Cinemaware games.

3) What does CD ROM stand for, in full?

Finally, complete our tiebreaker. It's time to do a bit of creative writing and tell a story in no more than 150 words. Witty entries stand a better chance of impressing our judges, and there's a catch. Your work of mini fiction must begin with the words "I couldn't wait to get home and load my latest Cinemaware CD ROM game" and it must end with "It was almost like a dream". The opening and closing words don't count as part of your 150 word allowance.

Type or write your entry neatly on a separate piece of paper and send it to us pinned to the completed entry form. The address is: CD ROM COMPETITION, ACE, 4 Queen Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 1EJ and entries must arrive by 5th May 1989. Normal ACE competition rules apply.

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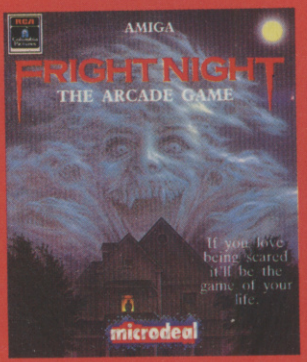

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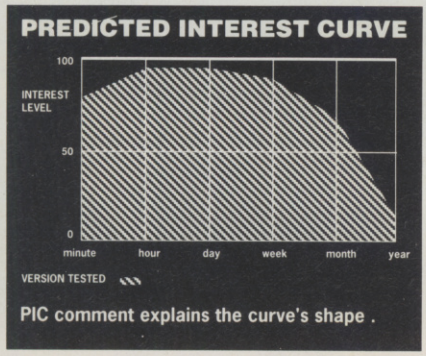
SCREEN TEST

THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

THE PREDICTED INTEREST CURVES

This unique feature to the ACE reviewing system charts the interest level that a game stimulates over a period of time. It may be totally addictive at first, but will you have completed it and got bored within the first week? The curve is accompanied by a comment to explain why it's the shape it is.



VERSION BOXES

This covers version-specific information on graphics, audio, loading problems etc. If there isn't a box for your machine but a version is planned, it will be covered as an update in a later issue.

GRAPHICS

This rating considers all aspects of the game's graphics, such as scrolling, animation, detail, use of colour and sprites. It is 'version-specific', so the limitations of each machine are taken into account – a good-looking Spectrum game will score higher than an average looking Amiga one.

AUDIO

The music and sound effects are rated here. Once again it is version-specific and a high rating is possible on even limited machines like the Spectrum and PC. Additional audio tapes do NOT count – they are part of the packaging and presentation and are not taken into account in the rating.

ST VERSION

All the screens are beautifully drawn, with moody lighting and great detail. Sound effects too are atmospheric, changing for each scene.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	8
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 941

IQ FACTOR

Just how much thought is required to get the most from the game? Shoot-em-ups are lucky to score three, while *Balance of Power* is a nine all the way. Puzzle games like *Xor* and *Boulderdash* will also score highly, but simple exploration games will not because they involve no deductive processes. Even platform games like *Nebulus* involve plenty of brain bending and therefore score well.

FUN FACTOR

Basically this is a measure of mindless addictiveness. Games like *Arkanoid* and *Flying Shark* require virtually zero brain power but are still remarkably addictive. Most coin-ops score well here because they are designed for instant satisfaction. Games don't have to be **either** fun **or** intelligent – they can be both.

ARCADE ACCURACY

This is a measure of the competence of a conversion of a coin-op. It does not reflect on the gameplay at all, but on how close the programmers have got to the original arcade game, given the limitations of the computer it's on.

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RELEASE BOXES

These contain price details and release dates for all the major computers we cover.

COLOUR SCREENSHOTS

Every single review is in colour because otherwise screenshots of a game just don't give a clear impression of what is going on. The reviewer of each game takes the screenshots himself, so that you get useful, informative pictures and not loading screens, title screens or other irrelevancies.

ACE RATING

This is not just plucked out of the air – it directly correlates to the area under the Predicted Interest Curve. To get a really high rating a game will not only have to be very addictive and interesting but stand the test of time as well, and still be enjoyable in a year's time. Just because a game does not get over 900 does not mean we are not recommending it – below is a general guide to what the ratings mean.

900+
A classic game, recommended without reservation.

800-899
A superb game, but perhaps lacking the long-term depth to last into the month and year categories.

700-799
Still highly recommended, but probably has a couple of aspects to the gameplay that take the edge off it.

600-699
The 'fair' zone, where it tends to be very good 'if you like that sort of thing'.

500-599
This still has good things going for it, but the game clearly has some noticeable problems.

400-499
Problems with gameplay and programming make this an inferior game.

300-399
Not only is the gameplay bad but the design was probably flawed in the first place.

200-299
This is getting really serious now, we are talking bugs and really dire gameplay.

100-199
ZX81 games running on an Amiga.

Under 100
Nothing has ever achieved this appalling level of rating. If anything ever does, it wouldn't even be worth having it for free.

THE TEAM ● **Each game is played by as many people as possible – not just the ACE team. All opinions are taken into account in the review and the ratings. The ACE team itself lays claim to one of the most impressive track records in games reviewing and can confidently tackle any type of game. We don't review anything until we are 100% certain that we've got it right. We've checked them out thoroughly – now you can too.**

ACE RATED

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All the best tips to beat all the best games.

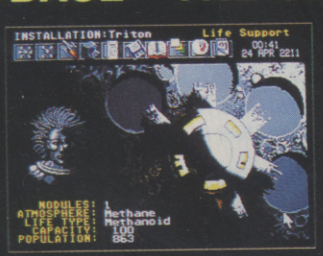
MILLENNIUM 2.2

ELECTRIC DREAMS colonise the cosmos

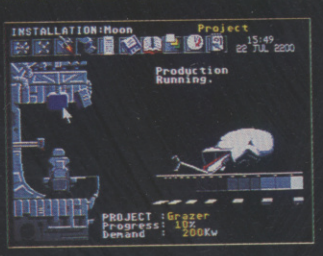
This is a colony on Triton. Colonies are the same as the moon base except that they lack research and production units, which are handled from the moon.

MOON BASE – THE CENTRE OF OPERATIONS FROM WHICH YOU CA CC

The Base screen can always be returned to by hitting the right mouse button. It's handy for easy, fast access – particularly when you are under attack and have to get to the defence station in a hurry.



LIFE SUPPORT – the capacity of the base is displayed and can be enlarged by adding extra nodules like the one already tacked on. The moon base inhabitants are human but when encountering other atmospheres the colonists have to be mutated into other strange forms.

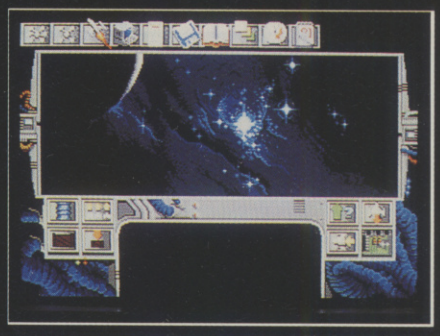


PRODUCTION – this is where all the equipment is manufactured. Not only are raw materials needed, but enough power from the generator as well. Here it is hard at work making a Grazer to collect resources from the asteroid belt.

DEFENCE – fighters are launched from here and orbital lasers set in action. The fighters are used in response to an attack and give a chance for some blasting action in a simple space shoot-out screen.

RESOURCES – the resources available and already mined are shown here. Something not everything is mined from the moon e game many things have to be brought in fr cts are elsewhere.

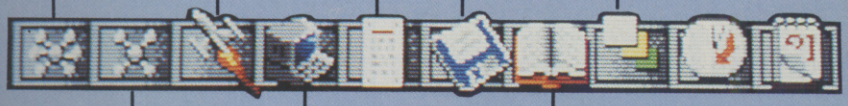
941 ACE RATED



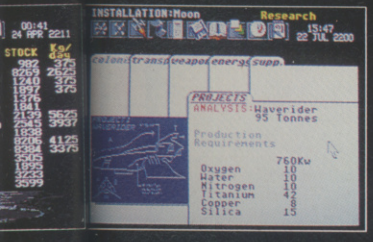
When accessing a ship you are presented with this control screen. It contains options for viewing or ditching cargo, setting courses and landing.

This is the inner solar system – all the planets move around the sun exactly as they should do. This is most evident when advancing through days.

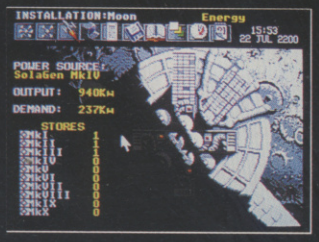
THE ICONS



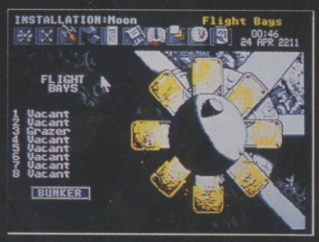
CA CCESS SEVEN SECTORS OF ACTIVITY.



es available RESEARCH – before you can build
wn here, but something it has to be researched. As
the moon – he game continues, more and more pro-
ught in from ects are made available to work on. Here
he research on a Waverider ship has
ust been completed. Investigation of the
abitability of planets and moons is also
one from here.



ENERGY – the more the colony grows, the greater the demands for power. Generators have to be continually improved – adding solar panels every time a more advanced one is installed. Early on this is one of the most crucial elements because without enough power nothing can be produced.



FLIGHT BAY – there are eight bays from which ships can be launched and docked. Once launched they are controlled from the craft roster on the top row of icons.

WHEN worlds collide, it's bound to cause something of a hiccup in one's lifestyle. Wiping out the entire population of Earth and leaving just a colony of 100 people on the moon is quite a large hiccup, but life must go on, so the human race must find a way to re-populate the solar system and, ultimately, the Earth.

Starting in such a precarious position means there are few options early on. First priority is to get a generator into operation so that other areas of the base can start work – getting the research department into action is crucial too, to start developing projects to do with supplies, energy, weapons, transport and colonisation.

Once a project is researched it can be manufactured by the production unit – if they have enough power and raw materials. This is where the resources section comes in. Many materials can be mined on the Moon, but some elements can't, and must be obtained from another source.

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As your power and equipment levels rise you can send out probes to investigate planets. Eventually the aim is to establish other bases that can mine materials and act as stepping stones for further conquest of the system.

Sadly, you will also find an alien presence that pops up to make life difficult. However, an intrepid space explorer will simply reply – FOMM. There are many other surprises awaiting, most of which are unavoidable, and the test is to see if you can deal with them when they occur.

Initially it's very much an adventure, where progress depends on doing the right thing. However, it quickly opens up into a strategy game with a myriad of options as to what to do next. This combination makes for utterly rivetting gameplay which, when combined with the atmospheric graphics and surprise elements, creates a classic game. It will take weeks and months of play to complete, but you will not want to put it down for a minute. Saving the world has never been so much fun.

● Bob Wade

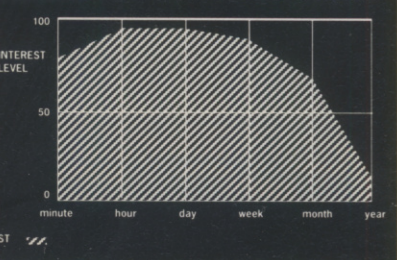
ST VERSION

All the screens are beautifully drawn, with moody lighting and great detail. Sound effects too are atmospheric, changing for each scene.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	8
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 941

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The strategy and presentation are instantly involving, and many surprises and long-term tasks make it enjoyable for many months.

even dumping you into the quicksand. Blood eggs can quickly infect a whole island when they hatch, or cause it to be eaten away entirely. Lost souls spin around the landscape trying to collide and steal your soul.

All these features mean that it's much more of an arcade challenge than *Sentinel*, but with a lot more strategy than *Virus*. Frequent panicking to get to safety must be mixed with careful land-building and searching in order to gain success.

The maps get very big and just finding the stones and obelisk can be a problem, as, too, can be locating uninfected areas through which to hop back to the obelisk in time on many of the levels. Maps can't just be accessed at random – you have to play through them in a particular order, determined by your progress in the game. As in *Sentinel*, not all 10,000 have to be played, and moreover the game saves your position to disk for later games. It's a delightfully-executed game that, despite borrowing ideas from all over the place, stands out as a great game in its own right.

● Bob Wade

ARCHIPELAGOS

Marooned with LOGOTRON

910 ACE RATED

How does one come up with a sure-fire hit computer game? Take elements from two of the most critically-acclaimed games of all time and roll them into one. That's a fair description of *Archipelagos* – two classic games, *Sentinel* and *Virus*, mixed in with a host of new ideas – but don't think this is just a rip-off because, despite some 'influence' on the ideas, it has gameplay all of its own.

The aim is to remove the alien presence from 10,000 different archipelagos. Each archipelago is an island or series of islands on which there are a number of standing stones and a single obelisk. Destroy the stones and the obelisk, *et voila* – archipelago completed.

You have a 3D view, from a short way above the ground, which can be swivelled through 360 degrees to see all around. The landscape is a flat chequerboard, no hills or depressions, with a number of objects that can be found on it. Actions are performed using a cross-hair cursor to click on the object or square concerned.

Stones can only be destroyed if there is a direct land connection to the obelisk. On all but the early levels, this involves building land between islands to connect them – shades of *Populous*. Once all the stones are destroyed a time limit starts, within which the obelisk has to be returned to and absorbed.

Creating land costs energy, which can only be gathered by absorbing the stones and spore pods. Moving around is much easier and costs no energy at all. You can move to any land square within a certain distance, even if it means going over water.

There are three sorts of area that can't be rested on – water, sand and infected land. The sand, logically enough, is at the border between land areas and the sea. Infected land is caused by 'arboreal trees' (translating roughly as 'tree-like trees') which move slowly towards you, infecting the land around them as they go. If they get too close, the square you are on will be infected and you're history.

Later levels have even nastier surprises awaiting. Necromancers remove areas of coastline, potentially severing a land bridge or

That's a standing stone in the foreground with a valuble spore pod on the left.

A forest of arboreal trees closing in. The moon in the sky is always to the north.

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No other versions planned		

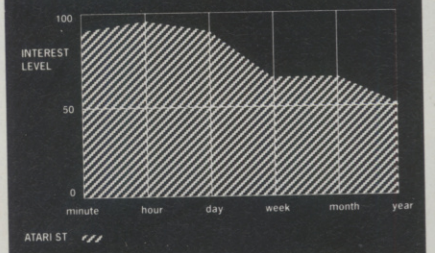
ST VERSION

The chequerboard graphics and features are reminiscent of *Sentinel* and *Virus* and have the same colourful and abstract qualities. The action is fast when moving around the islands – certainly no hanging around waiting for things to happen – and is complemented by an atmospheric soundtrack written by Dave Whittaker.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 910

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



From the first day it's fascinating. The many levels and excellent play maintain a high level of interest through to the year mark.

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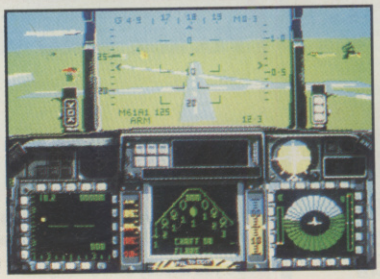

Atari ST screen.

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3D POOL

FIREBIRD on stripes

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BACKED by the talents of 'Maltese' Joe Barbara, Firebird's innovative pool game gives the bloodline of green baize simulators a welcome shot of adrenalin. Instead of the tried and tested overhead view, the designer has opted for a 3D display, where the game is visualised from a first-person perspective and viewed in more or less the same way as a real pool table.

Shots are lined up by sighting the white ball along an imaginary line directly away from the screen, just as if looking along a cue, so the shot is played directly forwards 'into' the screen. To make this possible, the table can be rotated around the white ball, and the scene can be zoomed in and out for clarity.

Shot strength is adjusted by setting a sliding meter, and a crosshair cursor shows the point of contact between cue tip and white: side is effected by moving the cursor to either side of the white. Top and stun depend on the angle of attack of the cue which, following the 'looking down the cue' approach, is altered by viewing the table from higher up or lower down.

Matches can be played in direct competition against another human, or solo versus seven digital pool sharks in a tournament, the winner of which then faces 'Maltese' Joe. The opposition vary in proficiency, and play in a very human fashion; for once, the solo player gets a nicely balanced game. More flamboyant players are also catered for with a trick shots section, including 'problems' to solve, and an edit screen for customised set-ups.

Ball movement in general is pretty realistic, and shots are made with little hassle, although the maximum shot strength is a bit on the weak side. Nonetheless, *3D Pool* is a great simulation, and deserves attention from more than just the 'Cool Hand' fraternity.

● Steve Jarratt

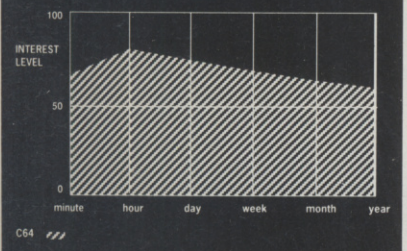
C64 VERSION

The simple four-colour screen suffices for the job in hand, and the only drawback is the C64's low-resolution display, which makes fine tuning of distant shots slightly tricky. Sampled sounds are used to accompany the action and, although they are quite clear, the volume has to be turned up to get the full effect.

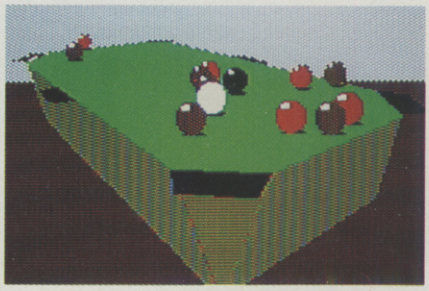
GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	4
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	8

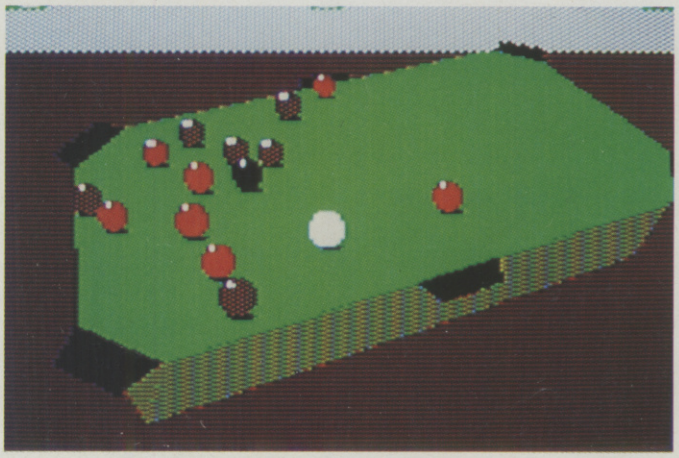
ACE RATING 839

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Not the sort of game to set the pulse racing, but it will still be worth loading up this time next year.





(Above) A low angle view of the table, half-way through a game. Red is winning, but looks to be stuck for a clear shot next go. (Right) The aim of this shot set-up is to knock the red into the centre bag, with deep screw bringing the white back down the table. This should leave the red into the top right or one of the four into the bottom right bag.

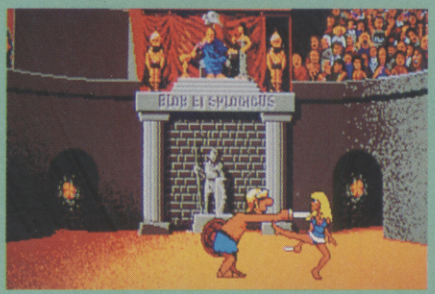
I LUDICRUS

Actual Screenshots, ST version reviewed, £19.95dk

AS the result of a drunken boast, Ludicrus the arena-cleaner finds himself in the gladiatorial ring with three vicious opponents separating him from death, or his usual place knee-deep in lion dung.

Armed with a wooden shield and sword, Ludicrus has an array of defence and attack manoeuvres at his command, ranging from jumps and crouches to sword-thrusts and a roundhouse chop.

Each opponent must be beaten over a five bout contest, with success signalling the entrance of the next combatant. Should Ludicrus be beaten, though, he has to face a lion which he must defeat to stay in the tournament (but which he does easily, with repeated moves).



Ludicrus goes for the throat of athletic adversary Bon D'Age – much to the delight of the bloodthirsty audience.

I Ludicrus features bold cartoon characters and some fluid animation, and the single backdrop is pleasant enough. However, the sampled effects are weak, and in truth, no amount of aesthetics can improve upon the flagging (if not entirely flagged) gameplay.

Apart from the obvious deficiencies of limited adversaries and scenery, the combat is also made frustrating by inconsistent collision detection in the enemy's favour. And following in the trail of *Barbarian*, *IK+* and the rest, any new beat-em-ups must be pretty amazing to succeed.

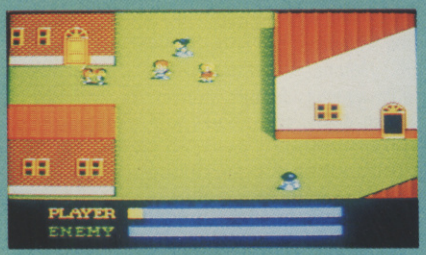
● Steve Jarratt

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	3	FUN FACTOR	4

ACE RATING 415

SEGA SPECIALS

Y'S ● £32.95crt



This is the town of Minea where the quest begins. Bumping into the townspeople will bring up a message window, with useful information on what to do next. Outside the cities, bumping into characters will put you in a fight.

Entering one of the town's buildings, you find yourself in the local bar. Talking to the men here may elicit useful information, but before it is revealed you may have to perform a task or be willing to fetch them an object.

Arcade adventures are becoming more popular on the consoles, with battery back-ups now allowing games to be saved for a later date. No longer is play restricted to shoot-em-ups where each game is relatively quick.

Your task in this example is to track down the six magical books of the Goddesses of Y's. These tomes will enable you to save the kingdom from the terrors of the evil sorceror, who also wants the books. The game starts in the town of Minea, where bumping into other characters will bring up a message window and a piece of (generally useful) information.

In most of the buildings you can buy things, or get information, to help on the quest. One of the first tasks is to acquire a sword, armour and shield. On venturing outside the town, there are many creatures to fight – just by running into them – and there's plenty of exploring to do.

There are many other areas to discover – the palace, mine and thieves' hideout – and other towns. In each place there should be useful information or objects, so it's just a matter of finding them.

It's going to take quite a while to crack this one and the save game feature is essential. The graphics are not very attractive, but are functional. The music changes between locations and is generally quite pleasant.

● Bob Wade

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	5

ACE RATING 784

BOMBER RAID ● £24.95crt

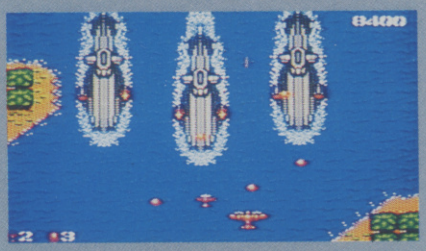
Reminiscent of games like *Flying Shark* and *1943*, this is another of those shoot-em-ups where power-ups are all-important. It's a vertical-scroller composed of five levels, each with a major military target – oh all right, end-of-level guardian – to destroy.

Enemy waves are made up of the usual military hardware: planes, tanks, submarines and battleships. The wave structure is very similar to *Flying Shark*, but the bonuses are different.

Shooting certain bonus items will reveal a P, S or 1. P increases firepower, S speeds up the plane and the 1 produces a drone. Shooting the 1 cycles through four numbers, which determine where the drone attaches itself and which way it shoots. You're also supplied with cluster bombs which are handy for taking out large enemies or when multiple attackers are on screen.

It's not too difficult to get a fair way through the levels, and it's an enjoyable blast along the way. Nothing special about the graphics or the sound.

● Bob Wade



The plane (at base of screen) and drone face subs with plenty of firepower.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 672

CYBORG HUNTER ● £22.95crt

Buzzword of the year so far is paladin, and this latest one is a bounty hunter on the prowl for Cyborgs and their boss Vipron. On the trail to victory over these heinous interlopers there are seven areas to battle through, with a final confrontation in the last one.

The chief Cyborg on the left is firing boxing gloves to knock the energy level down.

Each area is a multi-floored building connected with lifts. The areas have to be tackled in order, because completing one provides an ID card for access to the next. There are several types of Cyborg – two in each area. The Chief Cyborgs are the ones that have to be destroyed.

Using the map and a tunnel scanner, the Cyborgs can be tracked down and destroyed using one of several weapons. You only start with two types of punch, but guns and bombs can be picked up along the way. There are also a shield and a jet engine that help to get past obstacles.

Hits from Cyborgs and other obstacles reduce the life meter, which can be replenished by picking up capsules. Psycho power operates some of the weapons and this too has to be topped up.

Gameplay is limited to running around and blasting the Cyborgs, and the graphics are not that hot either. Not one of the better efforts around at the moment.

● Bob Wade

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	4

ACE RATING 478

NEC

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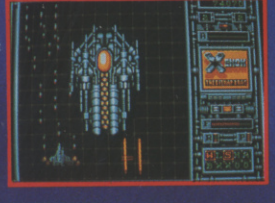

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FEDERATION OF FREE TRADERS

GREMLIN's Elitist space adventure

OVER two years in production, and the victim of lengthy delays due to recurring bugs, Gremlin's premiere 16-bit release finally hits the streets. Coded by Paul Blythe, author of *3D Galax*, *Federation Of Free Traders* deals with intergalactic space trading on a huge scale, and boasts an explorable universe containing over 8 million planets.

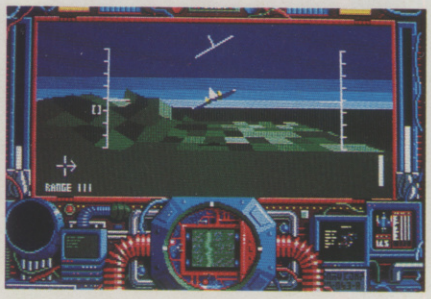
Starting from space station N3, in orbit around a backwater world called Iles, the newly-drafted Federation member sets out on the long, dark road to fame and fortune armed only with a battered old Hartley Mk II starship.

Coordination of the isolated members of FOFT is achieved via Galnet, an intergalactic communications system driven by telepaths. The system is accessed in the same way as a normal comms set-up: each user has his own ident number (an unwieldy 12 digits in this case) which must be entered each time the system is entered. From Galnet, the pilot can communicate with other ships, purchase goods and equip his vessel. The console used to access Galnet doubles as a programmable computer, running its own SIMPLE language.

Contact with the Federation facilitates the provision of missions for the rookie pilot to undertake. Successfully escorting a convoy between systems, destroying rogue satellites and similar missions earn the pilot credits which are vital to refuelling and improving the vessel's performance.

Onboard help comes in the shape of a galactic navigation chart which displays an impressive 3D representation of the host galaxy. This can be rotated realistically in two axes, and is used to plot hyperspace jumps. Courses between planets are plotted automatically on receiving a mission, but should an alternative route be needed, planets must be located by hand using only a code number for guidance. Needles and haystacks frequently spring to mind...

The first Galactic Spiral in all its glory. Hyperspace jumps are plotted by simply moving the cursor to the required planet.



Planet surfaces are displayed in 3D, complete with hills and trees. A map of the area is shown on the centre screen.

Whenever there's no space station in operation, the ship can be flown down to the planet's surface (which takes absolutely ages) where a beacon is then followed to the landing zone. Although a bold addition to the proceedings, this sequence is marred by limited control and an impractical targeting system.

In fact, this much-vaunted *Elite*-beater is liberally peppered with omissions, flaws and bugs. Compounded by a woefully inadequate manual, the game proves extremely inaccessible to the uninitiated and is frustratingly inconsistent: enemy ships move too quickly in combat; the player's ship moves too slowly during interplanetary travel.

For those who are willing to stick at it, there IS plenty to see and do in *FOFT;* but the gameplay is seriously flawed. You have been warned.

● Steve Jarratt

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£29.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£29.99dk	IMMINENT
No other versions planned		

ST VERSION

The filled 3D graphics are adequate, although opposing ships move too quickly for any detailed viewing. Only the planet surface visuals inspire to any extent, but even these grow less impressive with subsequent visits.

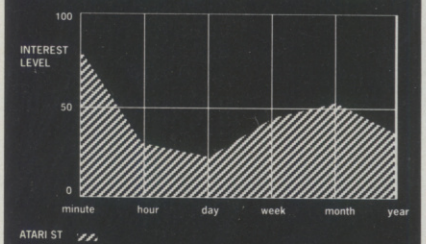
Sound is limited to a number of bolt-on tunes that can be played at will from a second data disk. However, in-game effects are unimaginative and silence is the preferred option once the tunes have been played out.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	2

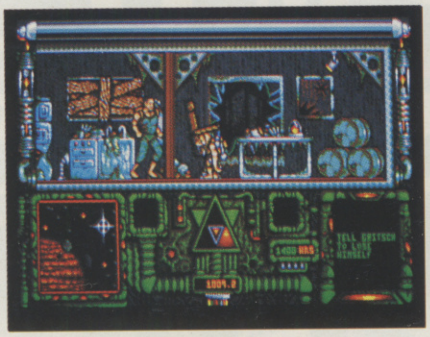
ACE RATING 507

An exterior view with space station and local planetary system in the background. Docking with the orbital platform is carried out automatically, to prevent rookie pilots from damaging the station. When docked, Galnet can be contacted once more, allowing the player to buy equipment, trade in a variety of merchandise, and be issued with his next mission.

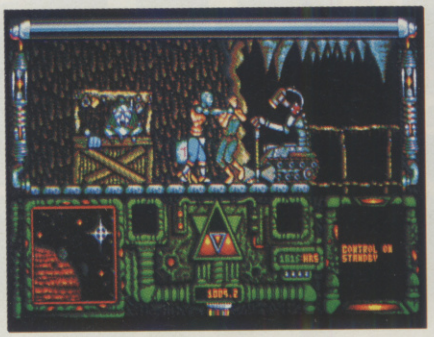
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



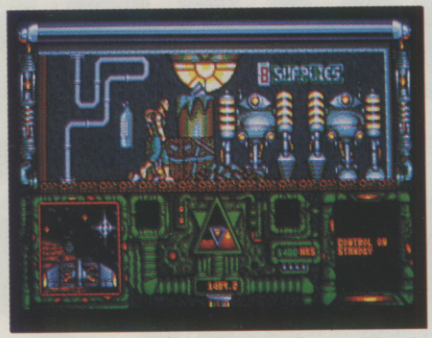
Initially high hopes are dashed by user-unfriendliness. Familiarity overcomes many of the less serious hurdles, but the 'unfinished' nature of the game killls long-term interest.



Jag encounters Gritsch – one of the low-life stooges who inhabit the city.



At the guarded toll-bridge, an alien prisoner gives Jag a pain in the neck.



A section of the escape ship has been found, as shown in the bottom left panel.

PRISON

CHRYSALIS breaking out

FRAMED by the authorities for a 'crime' committed in the call of duty, undercover law enforcement officer Jag Edwards has been sentenced to life imprisonment on the makeshift penal colony, Altrax.

Never one to roll over and die, Jag decides to act upon a rumour that tells of a pleasure craft which drifted off-course and crashed, relatively intact, on Altrax. If only he can track the vessel down and find the components needed to get the craft working again...

Beginning his campaign from the beam-down point in open country, Jag is directed around the flick-screen landscape to left and right, into and out of the scenery. His route takes him into town and through the derelict urban wasteland, which is inhabited by gangs of alien convicts. When confronted by hostiles, Jag simply resorts to physical violence to diffuse the situation: a series of kicks and punches normally fells the opposition.

In an effort to resolve his plight, Jag is forced to collect and use specific items along the way. A search of the immediate area is initiated by accessing a menu screen; any items discovered may then be picked up and utilised by selecting the correct action from the menu, which appears automatically according to the item(s) in question. As Jag nears his goal, parts of the escape craft are also discovered and a small screen partially filled to signify their collection.

Another good product for all keen arcade adventurers, this one. The problems are reasonably logical, but do become increasingly obscure as progress is made (especially those dependent upon the time of day!). Mapping is easy enough and the combat, although quite limited, is comfortable and adds further interest to the proceedings.

● Steve Jarratt

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£19.99dk	Summer '89
No other versions planned.		

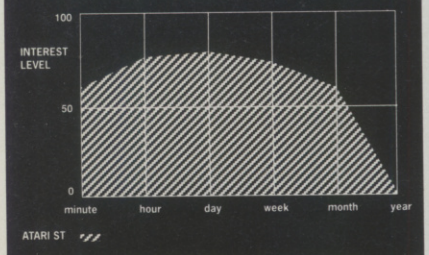
ST VERSION

Lovely backdrops and animated characters add a suitably sombre atmosphere, which is enhanced by the change from day to night. Sadly, there is very little sound to speak of, save for menu beeps and white-noise footfalls.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 764

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Enough of a challenge to hold interest until completion. Thereafter, consigned to the back of the disk-box.

EMMANUELLE

Tomahawk, ST version reviewed, £19.95dk

This lady clearly isn't shy – say the right things and a shallow, meaningless relationship will result. The cupid is your cursor – sweet, huh?

Warning: any part of this review that might cause offence to public decency, will be preceded by a red triangle thus ▲. When it is safe to continue reading, this sign will be displayed ▼. NB: a condom need not be worn when reading this review.

Emmanuelle is travelling around Brazil and your task is to meet up with her, ▲ get your rocks off ▼, and accompany her to Paris. In order to ▲ satisfy such lustful desires, the 'three laws of eroticism' have to be obeyed, in an attempt to build up your 'erotic potential' sufficiently to attract Emmanuelle. ▼ This involves visits to several cities in search of three statuettes, and ▲ 'encounters' with other women that obey the three laws ▼.

Each city has several locations where there are other characters. Talking to them can reveal information about the statuettes, Emmanuelle's whereabouts and ▲ most of the women can be sweet-talked into giving their all. ▼ However, most of this ▲ casual bonking ▼ does not do your energy, erotic or cash levels any good. There is plenty of entertainment to occupy your time, like visiting the casino, taking helicopter trips, going to a garden party or popping down to the beach – ▲ nearly all of them are potential scoring zones.

The sex scenes are tastefully done in silhouette, although there is a fair bit of nudity throughout. ▼ The quest is enjoyable, tongue-in-cheek and very attractively presented. It's not offensive but rather could be described as risqué in places. It will not take that long to solve, so it's strictly short-term entertainment.

● Bob Wade

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 636

"AMIGA – £19.99"

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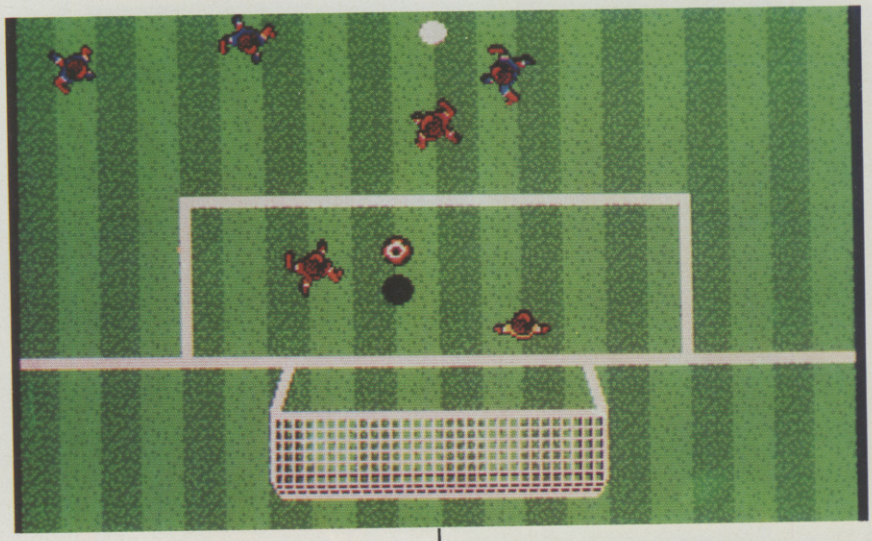
MicroProse Soccer

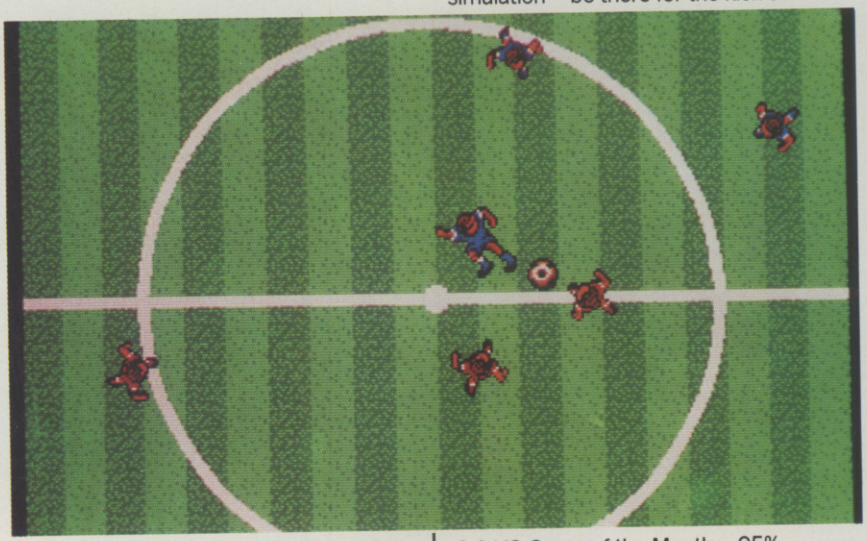


MicroProse shocked everybody when they released MicroProse Soccer for the C64. Not only had they produced a non-militaristic product, they had done it with such expertise that MicroProse Soccer has become an instant classic on that format. Now, MicroProse have released the sixteen-bit version. Just how do they compare with the original version? Read on . . .

The simulation provides both indoor and outdoor action with American rules six-a-side and standard eleven-a-side respectively. The time for each game can be varied between 2 and 12 minutes. Players may play against each other or one play against the computer. Selection of your team in the World Cup Competition is crucial, as it is in real life – it is much easier to win if you are a historically good footballing nation, such as Brazil than if you are Oman or Algeria. Conversely, if you get too good, you could try taking on the might of West Germany with yourself playing as Poland. Other control options allow for extremely varied games, with effects, such as, rain, thunder, overhead kicks and banana shorts coming into play.

You are presented, on kick-off, with a look-down view – not a common one, but one that works well. On the 16-bit versions, you get no-holds barred, full screen, 8-way scrolling (so smooth!). Control your player nearest the ball with your joystick, using the firebutton to kick the ball in the direction your player is facing. The position of the joystick when kicking the ball determines the path that the ball takes, such as, high lobs, banana kicks and overhead kicks. Recapture posession of the ball with a sliding tackle (the wetter the pitch, the longer the slide!). Should the opposition get within range, you gain control of your goalkeeper to prevent the inevitable shot from reaching the back of the net.

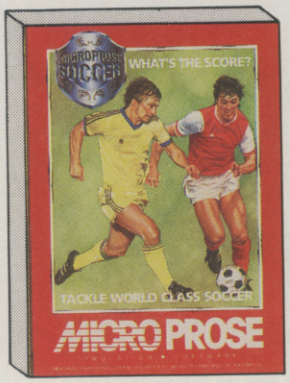
Throw-ins, corners and goal kicks all play their part in the game. Attention to detail is one of Microprose's hall marks and MicroProse Soccer has not been left wanting in any respect. The colour of the players strips, strength of banana kicks and an action replay when a goal is scored are all excellent finishing touches to an already brilliant game. Overall, MicroProse Soccer has to be the definitive football simulation – be there for the kick off!



C & VG Game of the Month – 95%
'Undoubtedly the best football game ever produced – miss it at your peril!'
C & VG

Zzap Sizzler – 90%
'One of the best soccer sims I've ever seen. Little touches like the rain on the pitch and banana shots really make it something special.'
Zzap

TGM Star Player – 89%
'MicroProse Soccer is of the highest quality – its fact action makes it far more playable than other soccer games.'



RELEASE SCHEDULE

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SPEC +3	OUT NOW	£14.95
AMSTRAD	OUT NOW	£14.95 cs £19.95 dk
ATARI ST	NEW	£24.95
IBM PC	SOON	£TBA
C64/128	OUT NOW	£14.95 cs £19.95 dk

RATING OUT OF TEN

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
STRATEGY	9
PLAYABILITY	9
OVERALL RATING	9

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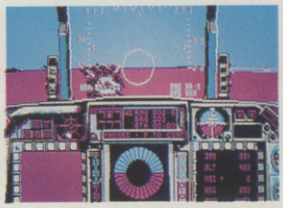
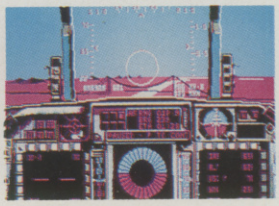


CGA PC version – Flying on the Tankbuster mission, in which you are providing close air support.

Deciding on the payload. All those AMRAAMs mean someone's preparing for a dogfight!



Running away after the dogfight: those fighters on your tail are reluctant to let you escape, though.

F-16 COMBAT PILOT

DIGITAL INTEGRATION lock on

952 ACE RATED

Way back in the days of the Spectrum, flight simulators were very limited in scope. Most consisted of a take-off followed by a long and tedious flight to another airfield where you usually crashed on landing. Nowadays, things are much different. Digital Integration are the latest software house to bring out a flight sim modelled on flavour-of-the-month aircraft, the F-16C Fighting Falcon.

There are four basic games: training (always a good place to start), a set of five missions, a campaign game and a one-on-one dogfight. Before opening up a pilot's log to do the thing for real, you can practise with a few training flights. Once you're confident you can handle the plane correctly, in the five missions you familiarise yourself with the multi-role capabilities of the F-16, learning reconnaissance, interception, and ground attack. You have to complete at least one of each mission before Fighter Command will allow you to take part in a full-blown campaign, which is where things really start to get tough. An untimely death during any of the missions means starting from scratch with a new pilot, so it's worthwhile studying the manual carefully.

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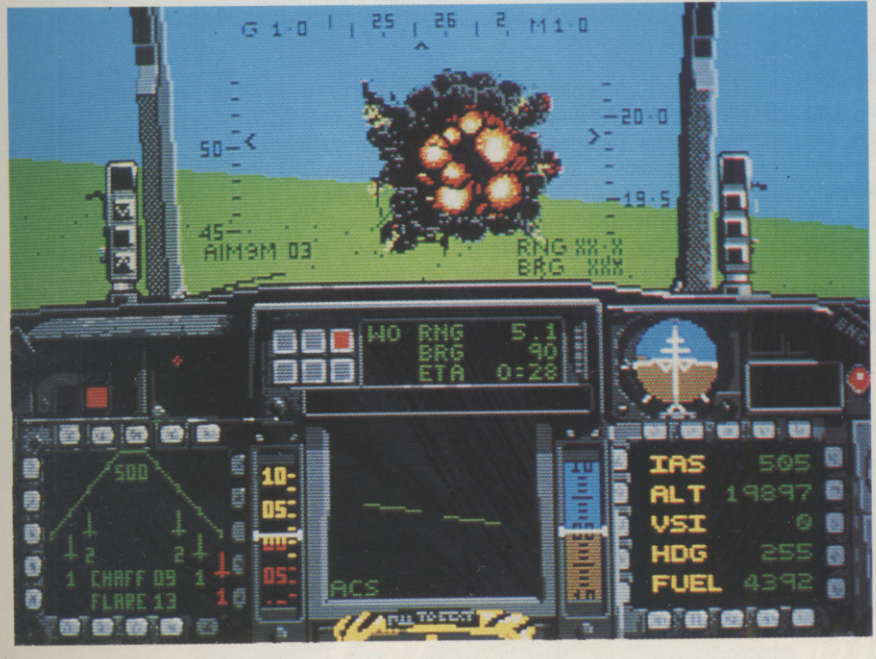
Details of other versions TBA		

In the campaign game you are picked as Squadron Leader and, come rain or shine, day or night, are put in the front line protecting friendly forces from enemy invasion. You'll need to be pretty sharp at strategic planning, too, because you'll also be responsible for assigning other aircraft to fly missions parallel to your own, requiring effective consideration of where to hit the enemy in order to hurt him most. After successfully completing any campaign you will be offered the chance to transfer to a squadron of higher status (there are eight squadrons in total).

Enough of the solo stuff. If you feel you can handle it, why not take on a remote human player in a one-on-one dogfight via a modem cable? Even this is possible in *F-16*. Everything has been thought of: the mix between action and realism is terrific. For instance, a safe landing requires much more than just pointing at the runway and plonking the kite down: even with some Ground Control Assistance, it's unlikely you'll pull it off without several hours' practice: and then try it without help! If you only buy one combat flight sim, *F-16 Combat Pilot* must be on the shortlist.

Andy Smith



ST version – Boom! that's taken care of that plane. At 20,000ft you'll show up on the enemy's Early Warning radar, though, so prepare for other fighters to intercept you. Perhaps you should drop to 500ft and attempt to sneak away.

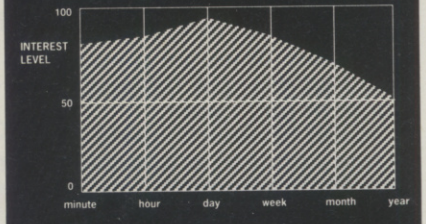
PC VERSION

Running in CGA mode is no problem despite the limited colours: it's fast, and boy is it thrilling! Forget the spreadsheet, this is what IBM should have been thinking of when they invented the PC.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 952

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Easy to get into and easy to keep playing.

ACE SCREEN TEST SPECIAL

"An even more enjoyable game to play than *Elite* or *Zarch*." Not our opinion, but that of David Braben: and he should know, because he wrote them both. The game is called *Exile* and, in an unusual departure for ACE, Pat McDonald takes a look at the BBC version.

You will need the grenade and weapon from the abandoned spaceship Pericles.

Past the hazards of the pit, and now exploring the mysterious labyrinth.

Birds don't actually kill: but they do have a tendency to frustrate and annoy.

EXILE

EVIL genius Triax, exiled to the planet Phoebus for the crime of genetically engineering monsters from normal life forms, has created a huge underground complex filled with his creations. Many moons later, the spaceship Pericles touches down on an isolated area of the planet: its mission to explore and determine whether the planet has anything to offer is cut short, but not before warning Earth of Triax's strictly dishonourable intentions to put swarms of invading monsters onto the motherplanet...

This is where you come in. En route home from a mission in which you have lost most of your equipment, you have been diverted to Phoebus to stop the Exile from carrying out his dastardly plans. Oh yes, and as you orbit the planet Triax nicks your Destinator, without which you are going nowhere!

You start the mission in your ship. The only real items you have are an environmental suit, a jetpack and a teleporter. The latter is a very handy device, as it can remember up to five locations, and teleport you back to any of them if (when!) you run into trouble.

The environmental suit is an excellent piece of kit. The backpack can store large amounts of energy: you start with 5 mega joules (that's five million joules, or roughly three car batteries' worth). This energy can be transferred to weapons such as the blaster and plasma gun, which use it up when dealing with nasties. Energy can be regained by using special energy pods which are scattered around the labyrinth.

The suit has a built-in doctor which tends wounds, but unfortunately when being blasted at by a turret mounted laser cannon or similar device, you take so much damage that this device can't cope. So you are automatically teleported back to the last remembered location. Neat!

So, off you zoom to the planet's surface, confident that you can deal with any threat (sounds a bit like the Marine Corps). The trouble is that, although you can approach the abandoned Pericles and even go underneath it, the door's locked! Then you notice that the automatic defences have been switched on: a sinister turret is rotating under the craft, which covers a deep, dark pit...

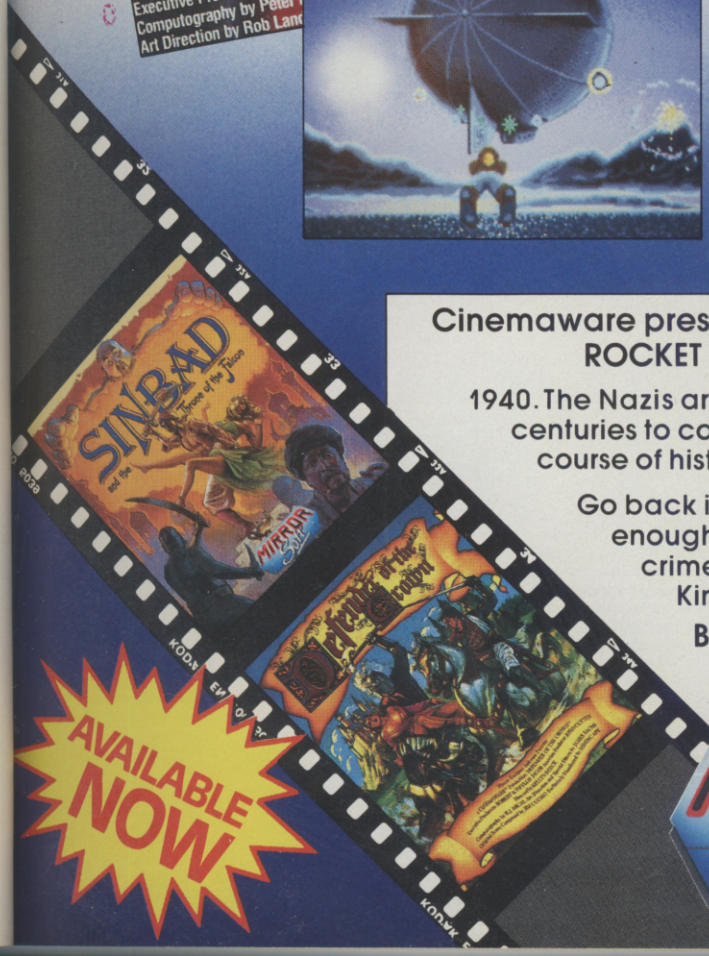
So the game unfolds, pitting you against real, logical problems. The laws of physics are obeyed throughout: if you shoot a boulder, it moves slightly. This effect varies with the weapon used: a pistol uses three kilojoules (3000 joules) of energy, which isn't very effective compared to the 500 kilojoule (half a million joules) blaster.

Moving boulders and puzzle-solving isn't the whole story. A lot of skill is needed to manouevre through the labyrinth, and a light touch is needed to avoid banging your head too much in the process. Also, you have to scavenge equipment (including hand grenades), so a bit of common sense on where stuff is stashed helps a great deal.

Control is excellent, and the sound exceptionally good for the machine. Beeb owners with sideways RAMs can have digitized sound samples (there's a very good scream). The movement on-screen is very fast, although a slight blurring at the edges can be off-putting at first. The sheer depth of things to do, places to visit, and quest to solve put *Exile* into the megagame league. Lucky C64 and Archimedes owners should soon be able to join in the fun, although version plans are as yet sketchy... ●

CINEMAWARE

PRESENTS



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BARBARIAN THE STORY SO FAR...The evil sorcerer Drax has agreed that if a champion can be found who is able to defeat his demonic guardians, the Princess Mariana will be released. From the wastelands comes an unknown barbarian, a mighty warrior, wielding his broadsword with deadly skill. Can he vanquish the forces of Darkness? ONLY YOU CAN SAY...
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LAST NINJA replaces © CARS on C64

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KARNOV Join Karnov, the fire-breathing Russian stongman, on his hazardous quest to defeat the evil dragon Ryu and find the Lost Treasure of Babylon. Karnov is a vast 4-way scrolling game that combines both strategy and fast action in nine challenging levels of gameplay. It is recognised by arcade addicts everywhere as one of the best games of its kind. Karnov also has something special in the way of characters – have you ever been killed by a skeleton on an Ostrich?
© Electric Dreams Software Ltd.

COMBAT SCHOOL Konami's arcade hit now for your home micro and already a No. 1 hit. Seven gruelling events featuring the Assault Course, Firing Range, Arm Wrestling and Combat with the instructor himself! Combat school throws down the challenge to the toughest of thoroughbred gamesters.
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TARGET RENEGADE Every move you make, every step you take, they're watching you. Fight your way through the precinct – the back alleys, the car parks, fight your way through the villainous community, the skin-heads, the Beastie Boys, the bouncers. This is just the tip of the iceberg on you chilling quest to confront "MR. BIG".

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NINTENDO NEMESIS

CASTLEVANIA ● £29.95crt

One of the more tricky adversaries encountered on the way to the Count's lair is the bone-throwing skeleton...

Scary monsters abound on the journey through a haunted castle in which an evil vampire Count has made his home. The hero's quest involves getting as rich as possible while making his way to the Count's lair for a final showdown.

Armed initially only with a fairly feeble whip, the hero can collect hearts, potions and extra weapons on the journey to the owner's lair, and can improve the lashing power of his weapon. Whipping the candelabra on the walls reveals hidden goodies which may be collected by walking into them. Hearts are worth gathering up as they add to your end-of-level bonus score, and are needed to activate some of the add-on weapons, like the time freeze which stops ghoulies in their tracks for a while and makes fights one-sided.

In true *Super Mario Bros* style, hidden bonuses are revealed when certain sections of the scenery are given the whip treatment. Look out for energy-giving pork chops, blocks that double the power of add-on weapons and super-valuable hoards of treasure. Special double and treble blocks increase the performance of extra weapons, and come in handy when squaring up to one of the end-of-level guardians.

A neat platform collecting game that keeps you coming back for more, *Castlevania* has all the touches that make a good arcade game. Sensibly, when you die the game allows you to start again at the beginning of the current level rather than forcing you to hack all the way through again. Plenty of puzzling routes to learn – and there's a small strategic element involved in the collection of the extra weapons: you can only carry one, and it's important to have the appropriate add-on at the right time.

● Graeme Kidd

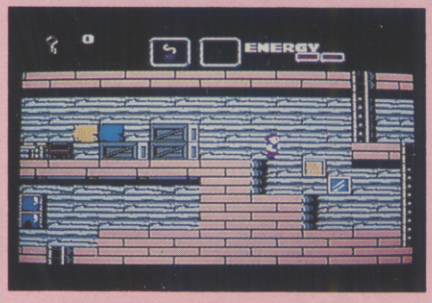
GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	5
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 857

GOONIES ● £22.95crt

Conflict with the Fratelli gang continues – now the bad guys have captured Annie the friendly mermaid and are holding her hostage inside their hideout. One by one, the Goonies have entered the Fratelli HQ on a rescue mission, but they have all ended up prisoners. Only Mikey is left, and he embarks on the arcade-adventure quest to rescue the prisoners.

Play is divided between action sequences and adventure sequences. The action element of the game involves exploring the Fratelli hideout which consists of two maps made up of screens crammed with platforms and ladders. Strange creatures patrol the platforms and do their best to touch Mikie and rob him of energy – at the start the hero has a yo-yo which is used to kill off the enemies, but more powerful weapons may be added to the inventory. The



Scurrying along the platforms and ladderways that make up the Fratelli HQ.

Fratellis themselves are also wandering around, and are made of much sterner stuff...

Doorways dotted around the massive number of screens that make up the play area lead to chambers in which helpful people and useful items are often hidden. Walking through a door gives access to the adventure part of the game, where a menu system allows objects to be manipulated. Some of the rooms link the two halves of the platform map, while others are little more than walk-in cupboards.

Fans of 'traditional' arcade adventures will find plenty to keep them amused in *Goonies II*. It is a large and complex collect-em-up that will take ages to complete, even if you have access to the full solution. The action and adventure sequences are both undemanding, simplistic even, but the real challenge lies in discovering where everything is and then mapping a route around the game.

● Graeme Kidd

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 673

GRADIUS ● £24.95crt

Great grandaddy of the horizontally-scrolling progressive shoot-em-ups, *Gradius* (or *Nemesis* as it was known over here) has survived the conversion from arcade to console pretty much intact, and comes as a welcome – if somewhat overdue – hole-filler in the Nintendo owner's collection.

The aim is simple: progress as far as possible and stay in one piece. A helping hand in this matter comes in the shape of bolt-on accessories traded for the red tokens left behind upon the destruction of specific attack waves and alien vehicles. A panel at the bottom of the screen shows which item is currently available, and a jab of the second button installs the device. In this way, additional equipment such as lasers, drones, missiles and a nose-shield can be fitted to the player's ship.

Subsequent levels feature bizarre landscapes inhabited by hostiles, ranging from walking gun emplacements to missile-spitting Easter Island heads. And at the end of each level, a guardian mothership drifts on and must be vapourised before the mission is allowed to continue.

This latest Konami product is an intelligent conversion, tailoring the game to suit the console's capabilities (there are only two drones available, for instance). As a result, it's colourful, smooth and pretty much flicker-free. It's also very addictive! A definite must-buy.

● Steve Jarratt

Even with a well equipped ship, the 'Easter Island' level can still cause the player plenty of grief.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 874

BLASTEROIDS

Breaking rocks in the IMAGEWORKS

NOSTALGIC memories of things past can often be shattered by someone trying to re-release or reinterpret them. Many a record, and many a film, has been ruined this way. Is the same true of computer games? The arcade reworking of *Asteroids* certainly kept players happy, so will the computer versions live up to the reputation of their grandparent?

The aim is to battle through a series of sectors to a final confrontation with a large alien named Mukor. The sectors are arranged in a grid of nine or sixteen squares to represent a galaxy, and each sector takes the form of a single wraparound screen. The asteroids in each sector must be destroyed before access can be gained to another one. Clear the whole grid and battle with Mukor ensues.

The craft you control can be transformed into any of three ships: Speeder, fast but vulnerable: Fighter, heaviest firepower: Warrior, heaviest armour but with slow firing and movement. Movement is achieved by spinning left or right and applying thrust. The basic weapon is a forward firing gun. The ship can be transformed at any time, and the Warrior and Speeder can be docked in two-player mode to provide a ship with greater protection and power. One player controls the movement, the other blasts away as the gun turret.

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IBM PC	No version planned	

Amiga – The blue 'popcorn' asteroids get bigger every time they are shot, until enough hits are made to stop them.

As well as quarry-loads of rocks to blast, including red ones that release energy crystals and blue 'popcorn' ones that take several hits to make them stop, there are other surprises like eggs that release leeches, seekers that home in and ships that shoot at you.

When an alien ship is destroyed it sometimes leaves a bonus capsule giving special powers: shields, double shots, stronger shots, extra fuel capacity, increased thrust, invisibility, a magnet to attract energy crystals, and a Ripstar capability that spins the ship around, loosing off volleys of bullets in all directions.

Mukor is a big blob with tentacles, each one of which needs multiple shots to destroy it. If he is destroyed another galaxy can be entered. *Blasteroids* is a very entertaining game with lots of interesting features but in the long run the sectors and galaxies are all very similar and the gameplay becomes unexciting: even when there are two players blasting away.

● Bob Wade

ARCADE ACCURACY

Only minor changes have been made, and they are far from being significant ones.

COIN OP SCORE 8

AMIGA VERSION

Looks and sounds OK but isn't that impressive for the Amiga. The levels are also a bit too easy.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 746

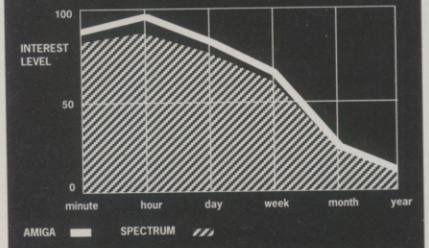
SPECTRUM VERSION

Graphics are good considering the machine's limitations. Unfortunately the action is slow, but this does not affect the gameplay much.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	4	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 693

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Peaks after a day, when you have mastered Mukor, and drops off fast at the month mark because of repetitive action. Slowness means a lower interest level for the Spectrum.

THUNDERWING

■ Cascade, ST version reviewed, £19.95dk

What plot there is, is reminiscent of *Firefox*: you have stolen a plane and have to fly it back across enemy territory. In other words, it's a vertically-scrolling shoot-em-up in which everything looks like the left-over bits of a car engine after the local DIY expert has reassembled it.

The first thing that is noticeable about the craft is it's very sluggish in moving around the screen. This is a source of great frustration when trying to avoid bullets – you can react fast enough but the ship does not.

The attack waves are familiar from the *Flying Shark* genre – groups of fighters, tanks that appear from buildings on the ground, and large vehicles that take multiple hits to destroy. The weapon power-ups, left after certain waves of fighters are shot, are also familiar – they produce a wider field of fire from the gun.

Disruptors act like smart bombs, producing a spinning field around the ship that kills anything that touches it. All these features are standard fare. It's competent, but has nothing remarkable about it in graphics, music or gameplay. Much better can be found in previous games, such as *Flying Shark*.

● Bob Wade

If this wave of pink fighters is destroyed it will leave a weapons power-up which can then be collected.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	1
AUDIO	3	FUN FACTOR	4

ACE RATING 417

MIXING Business WITH LEISURE WILL BE A REAL EDUCATION

Commodore computer show

Britain's brightest event for Commodore computer users is back! And there's more to see than ever before.

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And you'll also be able to attend seminars covering all aspects of using Commodore micros in your business.

Leisure

The C64 and Amiga computers are the most powerful 8 and 16 bit micros for producing fast-action arcade quality games. The range of new software on show will demonstrate how these machines' power is continually being stretched, producing faster and even more addictive games with superb graphics.

If you're a keen game player, you'll find there's so much on offer at the show you're guaranteed a real treat!

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Commodore micros are now used as educational tools all over the country. With the development of BBC Basic on the Amiga, and the advent of Desktop Video (combining TV pictures with text and graphics), the range of educational applications is endless.

At the show you'll see how the latest software packages are making real breakthroughs in the educational sector, and be able to try them out for yourself.

Special Events

As well as special events and presentations, you'll also be able to meet some of your favourite celebrities, and maybe get a chance to talk with them about how they use micros in their work.

So for a great day out, whether you want to see what the future holds for Commodore computers, to buy the latest software or to get advice on specific applications, the Commodore show is the place to go. And if you send in the coupon today, we'll knock £1 off the price of each ticket!

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VINDICATORS

TENGEN take to the spacelanes and tank it

EARTH is under attack from (would you credit it?) them pesky aliens again (what is it about Earth that they love so much? Megadeath? Butlin's holiday camps? Who knows?) Anyway, they're on their way and it's down to you to stop them slipping through the hole in the ozone layer and murdering us all in our beds.

ARCADE ACCURACY

The graphics (and especially the explosions) are superb. It plays well and is as close to the original as you could reasonably expect.

COIN OP SCORE 9

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ST VERSION

Good gameplay, good graphics (sound effects aren't so hot) and a spot of thinking required (but not too much), what more do you need from a coin-op shoot-em-up?

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 806

These aliens are travelling in 14 space stations, and the only way to stop them is to infiltrate each space station in your SR-88 Strategic Battle Tank (known as a Vindicator) and destroy the base's command centre.

Now that's a lot easier said than done, because your SR-88, powerful though it may be, is not much of a threat to all the alien defences on board each station. There are roaming alien tanks to contend with as well as gun emplacements and flying saucers, all of which pump out shield-depleting shots with uncanny accuracy. To protect yourself from this onslaught you're armed with a front-firing gun with which you can try to annihilate them before they annihilate you.

To boost your effectiveness, the aliens have kindly left bonus stars on each level that allow you to purchase extra benefits including extra tank speed, extra range and strength of shots, force fields and smart bombs. To collect the stars, simply trundle over them, and trade them in for the bonuses at the end of each sub-level (about three per station). To make it to the end of each level you have to collect keys that are lying on the floor: once collected, they open doors that you simply drive through.

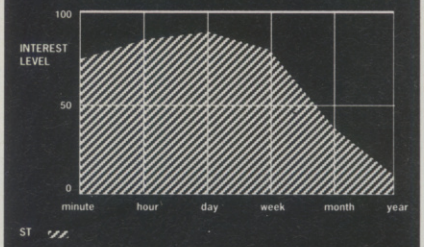
As well as avoiding flak from the enemy installations you have to ensure your tank keeps rolling by collecting fuel drums which can also be found lying around the place. Once you reach the final level of each space station you have to locate its command centre and bomb it before driving through to the next level.

Vindicators was a great coin-op and this conversion does the game justice. The control method is not terribly easy to pick up but you'll soon get the hang of it and it won't be long before you're addicted to this out of the ordinary shoot-em-up that offers a fair ol' slice of lasting interest.

● Andy Smith

Time your run through those pylons just right, or you'll receive a nasty charge through your chassis!

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A well-converted and playable game.

OPERATION NEPTUNE

INFOGRAMES fathom it out

MING, the Yellow Shadow, is out for world domination again, this time via a network of undersea bases. The task of knocking this plan on the head has fallen to Bob Morane – so wetsuits on, snorkels out and let's go play with the sharks.

To destroy the network of bases on the ocean floor you must starve them of energy, either by blowing up the links between them, or by bombing the base itself enough times. In the meantime Ming will be trying to build more bases and destroy yours.

Scooting around the ocean floor in the bathyscape, you find many watery hazards awaiting. One problem is that your supplies of oxygen and energy are strictly limited, and need to be frequently replenished back at a base. The undersea life is made easier by decoy drones that draw enemy patrols away and an autopilot that saves having to drive everywhere manually: but decoy drones and mines for blowing things up are also limited and have to be stocked up at regular intervals.

There are two separate arcade action screens – one puts you at the controls of an undersea scooter to battle enemy patrols in *Space Harrier* style, and in the other a frogman must accurately plant time-bombs on the enemy installations. The frogman is at risk from enemy divers with spear guns, sharks and giant squid.

Although the game is nicely presented, there isn't much variety or depth. What's there is good, but would benefit from having a touch more substance.

● Bob Wade

A forward view reveals one of your own bases. The instrument panel is accessed with the mouse pointer.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.95dk	IMMINENT
SPEC 128	No version planned	
AMSTRAD	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	To Follow
C64/128	£9.95cs • £14.95dk	To Follow
IBM PC	£24.95dk	IMMINENT

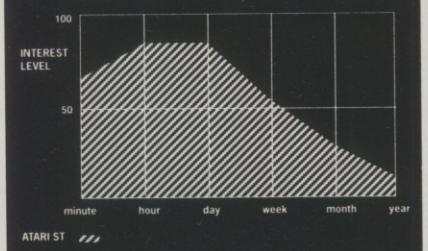
ST VERSION

The underwater noises include many neat sound effects. The graphics and animation are not quite as spectacular as past efforts, but are still attractive and effective.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	4
AUDIO	6	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 696

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Takes a while to work out the tactics, peaks in the first day when a mission is completed, then falls off due to shallow gameplay.

CHICAGO 30'S

US GOLD bite the bullet

DETECTIVE Eliot has picked up the scent of illegal alcohol, and the trail leads him from the port, through the city centre to the city outskirts, and to a showdown in the gangsters' warehouse.

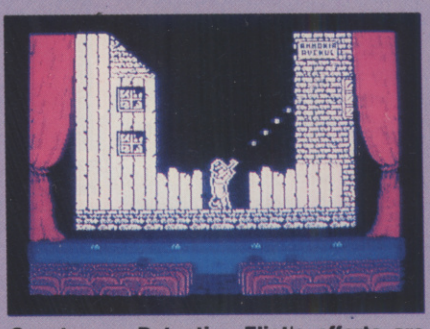
The route is fiercely guarded by hordes of hoodlums who appear from behind packing cases, at windows and out of the sewers. They are all intent on stopping the dick dead in his tracks, and so Eliot must run the gauntlet of gunfire and hand-grenade explosions.

To protect himself, Eliot jumps, ducks and fires his Tommy gun, which he can point in five directions, covering himself from attack in front, behind and above.

A brief respite from the assault comes at intervals when Eliot climbs into his customised Chevrolet and powers across town, safe from the hail of bullets. He can still gun down the opposition, though, by sticking his head out of the window Dirty Harry-style.

Not really a bad shoot-em-up, but *Chicago 30's* is simply lacking in variety. There's little difference in gameplay throughout the four levels, and extended play soon grows tiresome.

● Steve Jarratt



Spectrum – Detective Eliot's efforts are viewed as if on stage. As lives are lost, his proximity to death is signalled by the bored audience leaving the show!

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
SPEC 128	£8.99cs • £12.99dk	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	OUT NOW
C64/128	£9.99cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
No other versions planned		

AMSTRAD VERSION

More colourful than the Spectrum, but blocky, slow and much less entertaining. Enemy shots are even more difficult to see than on its Z80 brother, adding a good dose of frustration to the proceedings, and sound is equally poor.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	4

ACE RATING 464

SPECTRUM VERSION

Clean, two-colour graphics with smooth parallax scrolling. However, enemy fire is frequently difficult to see against the detailed backdrops. Control of Eliot is fairly painless, and the speed of play makes the game easily accessible. Sound is kept to a minimum: simple gunshot effects only.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	5

ACE RATING 598

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

Entertaining for the first few goes, but limited variety sees interest fall off with progress.

Be part of the action at the ATARI COMPUTER SHOW

**Alexandra Palace, Wood Green,
London N22
Friday to Sunday,
June 23 to 25, 1989**
Fri & Sat: 10am – 6pm,
Sun: 10am – 4pm

The Atari Computer Show is back – with many new products and developments. Atari has grown to be one of the major players in the computer world, supported by an incredible wealth of top quality applications, games and utilities – all on view at this show.

MIDI

All the latest hardware and software in the rapidly expanding scene of micro music will be on display, including keyboards, samplers, sequencers and professional studio software.

With an Atari/Midi setup you can produce top-quality music, quickly and simply – editing out mistakes in a way that's impossible with live recordings. So if you're in any way interested in making music with your micro this is the place to come to find out all about it.

CAD

Computer Aided Design has grown to become one of the most important uses for modern computers. With a CAD system you can design houses, cars and electronic circuits – in a fraction of the time it would take you with pen and paper.

With the high speed and powerful graphics of Atari micros it's hardly surprising that bigger and better CAD programs are pushing back the frontiers all the time.

And only at the Atari Computer Show can you see all the latest systems under one roof.

BUSINESS

Many companies will be demonstrating their latest software and hardware, specially designed to release the full business potential of Atari computers.

As well as products for the 8-bit and ST, you'll be able to try out applications for the powerful Atari PC compatible series.

And you'll also be able to get expert advice from professionals.

DTP

The art of combining text and pictures is big business nowadays because, with a low-cost DTP program, you can create anything from a club newsletter to a monthly magazine or book.

At the show you'll be able to try out the latest scanners, digitisers and super-fast programs, and get a first-hand glimpse at the way DTP is set to develop in the future.

GAMES

Atari computers are renowned for their ability to run fast-action arcade-quality games.

The range of new software on show will demonstrate how the power of these machines is continually being stretched, producing faster and even more addictive games with superb graphics.

The winning entry in the STOS Gameswriter of the Year Award will be revealed, and several new exciting STOS accessories will be shown for the first time.

If you're a keen game player, you'll find there's so much on offer at the show – you're guaranteed a real treat!

DON'T MISS IT

So for a great day out – whether you want to see what the future holds for Atari computer users, take advantage of the bargains on offer or get advice on specific applications – the Atari Computer Show is the place to go.

And if you send in the coupon now, you'll save £1 off the price of a single ticket!

SPECIAL OFFER

For the first time we are now offering a family ticket for just £11, allowing entry for two adults and two children. So you can save up to £6 off the usual entry price!

How To Get There

Alexandra Palace is so easy to get to by car, rail, underground or bus. It has its own British Rail station, just nine minutes away from King's Cross, and there's a free bus service shuttling between station and show every 10 minutes.

If you're travelling by road, the show is only 15 minutes away from Junction 25 on the M25. Car parking is free.

DATABASE EXHIBITIONS

ADVANCE TICKET ORDER

POST TO: ***Atari Computer Show Tickets, Database Exhibitions, PO Box 2, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral L65 3EA.***

Please supply:

- ☐ Adult tickets at £4 (save £1) ..... £_____
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Signed.....

Admission at door: £5 (adults), £3.50 (under 16s)

Advance ticket orders must be received by Wednesday, June 14

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Please quote credit card number and full address

A701

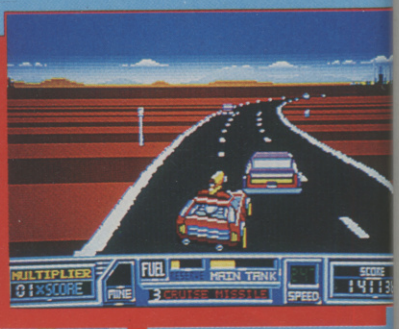
SUPERCHARGED DESTRUCTION

ROAD BLASTERS™

16 BIT ACTION!

"VROOM! BOOM! & DOOM!" C. & V.G.

Screen shots from Atari ST version



The thunderous world of destruction .... the ultimate race against death, Roadblasters delivers all the gripping action and high speed thrills of the arcade spectacular.

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ATARI ST
£19.99

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U.S. GOLD

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BALLISTIX

PSYCLAPSE's ball blaster

REMEMBER the game *Crossfire?* The one with the small plastic pistols you had to fill with ball bearings to fire at a small puck in order to get it into the opponent's goal? Well, here's a computer game based on the same idea.

The game can be played by one or two players, the idea, again, being to hit the puck into the opponent's goal by firing balls at it. In the two player game there are 80 screens or pitches to play over, with each match made up of a predetermined number of legs (between one and nine). The pitches vary for each game, with new elements introduced for many of them. For example, red arrows on some pitches push the ball in the direction of the arrow should the ball roll over it.

There are also pinball-like bumper affairs that the ball can bounce against, making it difficult to hit, especially if you opt for the 'fire at sight' option. The easier 'fire from arrow' option allows you to fire at the ball from the on-screen arrow that you move around. The fire at sight option means you move a sight around the screen and the balls are fired from your own goal mouth. As well as the method of firing, there are also options to allow you to alter the ball speed, the firing rate and the ball's life span, i.e. how long each ball remains on the pitch before it disappears back into either your or your opponent's reserve.

In one player mode there are some 50 pitches, but you don't actually take on a computer opponent. Instead, you're battling against the forces of gravity on a pitch tilted towards your goalmouth. There are a number of bonuses that appear on the pitch and can be collected by firing balls over them, including a shield and a bomb that explodes into lots of balls that fly across the screen knocking your puck everywhere.

Ballistix starts off well, but it lacks addictive gameplay. The differing pitches add variety, but it's all very similar stuff that you'll eventually get tired of.

● Andy Smith

In one player mode you're fighting against gravity as opposed to a computer-controlled opponent.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.95dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
C64/128	Version possible: details TBA	
IBM PC	Version possible: details TBA	

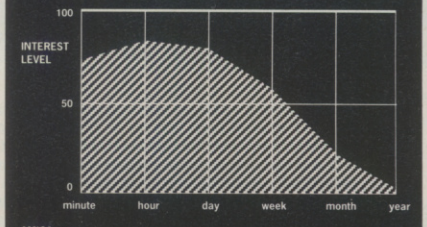
AMIGA VERSION

Graphics are great, as are the sound effects, but it's not got the compulsion or gameplay to rate as anything more than reasonable, and so it's doubtful you'll be playing much in a year's time.

GRAPHICS	8	IQ FACTOR	2
AUDIO	7	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 686

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Nicely done, but lacks the addictive qualities to keep you playing.

JUG

MICRODEAL with an intergalactic vessel

JUG is so called because of the main sprite's barrel-chested appearance – nothing to do with ears, hares or prison. Its task is to locate the tumour that is killing off the living core of the planet and wipe it out. Only problem is, the planet's defence systems see Jug as hostile, and attack.

The playing area is a 2D maze of rooms split up into sectors and zones. The layout is similar to *Cybernoid,* as is the gameplay, but there is more of an arcade adventure element. Moving around the screens there are objects to be picked up including keys, weapons and fuel. The keys open up new sectors for exploration, the weapons enhance your initially-weak firepower and the fuel allows the craft to fly and repairs the shield.

The defence systems are everywhere and, as well as patrolling particular screens, waves will fly on from nowhere and shoot you up. The shield can take a lot of hits but will eventually give out. The ship moves around slowly, so teleports speed things up considerably.

The gameplay is simple exploration stuff: well programmed certainly, but lacking anything out of the ordinary to pep it up.

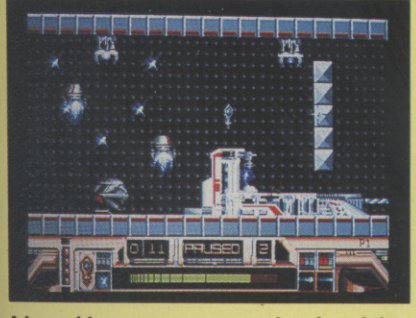
● Bob Wade

ST VERSION

Excellent parallax scrolling and plenty of sharp sprites. Music and effects are up to scratch too.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	3
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	6

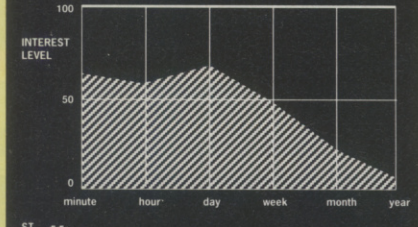
ACE RATING 580



A key mid-screen removes a barrier, right.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.95dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.95dk	IMMINENT
No other versions planned		

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



There's little excitement early on, but continued exploration perks things up after a day. Simple gameplay means it won't hold your interest for ever.

Talespin

BY MARK HEATON

ATARI ST
AMIGA
& IBM

THE INTER-ACTIVE PROGRAM CREATOR

AMIGA CONVERSION BY TIMOTHY PURVES

WHAT IS IT? Talespin is a package which allows the collecting together of drawings, texts and sounds onto a series of pages together to form an interactive story, guide or textbook, which is read purely by clicking the mouse on the drawings or texts. Variables may be used to control the flow of narrative or record progress made. Talespin itself is entirely mouse-driven and very user-friendly, requiring no programming skills for its use. It includes an art package as well as importing Neochrome, Degas or IFF picture files and also imports ST-Replay or Amiga A.M.A.S. created Digitised Sound. The use of sound is optional. Its facilities include giving full details of disk space usage, location of all pages referring to any particular page, drawing, sound or variable, completely interactive development allowing changes to any part of a title at any time, the copying of drawings and sounds from other titles, the 'chaining' to other titles allowing the spreading of a story or textbook across several disks, and the provision of Demo mode, which allows a title to run on its own for demonstration purposes.

WHAT IS IT FOR? It can be used to create interactive adventure games, for profit, pleasure or instruction. Or in business to create a sales demonstration, or product servicing manual. Or in education: either using Talespin itself to teach the design and logic of computer systems in a non-technical way, or using Talespin as a vehicle for the teaching of any other subject. Or create an expert system with it. Or a school magazine. Or . . .

Talespin is ideal in most applications requiring inter-linked graphics and text and usable by persons with no programming expertise. And it's fun!

IMPORT ANY NEO DEGAS IFF PICTURE FILE OR USE TALESPINS OWN BUILT IN ART PACKAGE

ONCE DRAWN A PICTURE CAN BE CHANGED IN HEIGHT, WIDTH & COLOUR AND CAN APPEAR MANY TIMES ON MULTIPLE PAGES

POSITION A CHARACTER BY SIMPLY CLICKING & DRAGGING WITH THE MOUSE

LINK TEXT BOXES TO CHARACTERS AND ALLOW MULTIPLE CHOICES IN THE BOXES

OVER 100 COMMANDS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE DEVELOPMENT MENUS

SOUNDS CAN BE IMPORTED FROM REPLAY 4 AND THEN REPLAYED AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS AND LINKED »

replay 4

microdeal

·A·M·A·S·

« SOUNDS CAN BE IMPORTED FROM A.M.A.S. AND THEN REPLAYED AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS AND LINKED

CREATE YOUR OWN COMMERCIAL PROGRAMS

Once you've finished developing your program whether it's an adventure, an educational program or other you can lock your program so on one can enter the development mode.

TALESPIN comes with a public domain display program called "Telltale": with this you can distribute your own programs or offer them to pubishers.

COMPLETE AND COMPREHENSIVE MANUAL

The manual comes as a complete Tutorial with a scaled down version of "The Grail" adventure and also a comprehensive reference guide.

ATARI ST
AMIGA
£29.95

TALESPIN COMMAND FACILITIES AVAILABLE

** choose/create title * save position * load position * select drive /folder * auto start * demo program * help * drawing define * page define * sound define * variable define * turn to another page * add drawing to page * modify palette * select backround colour * page entry options * list conditions * list/set variables * move drawing * swap colour * shrink/reverse drawing * change drawing order * add/edit/delete text * replace/remove drawing * locate item * show disk space * show drawing/sound-/page size * chain to other title * and more*

SCREEN TEST

SUPPLEMENT

As ever, the Supplement supplies all the added extras for the gamesplayer at no extra cost. We nose out the most exciting Budget bargain buys, Steve Jarratt offers a Sega special along with the usual top-of-the-range Tricks 'N' Tactics maps, hints and tips, and the ACE Updates team checks out the latest versions...

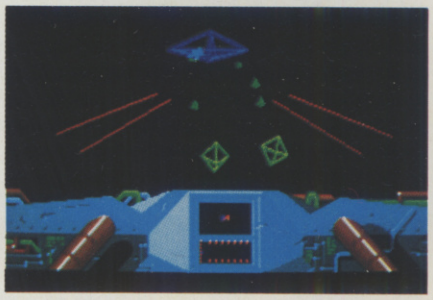
BUDGET BARGAINS

CHASE

MASTERTRONIC ● Amiga, ST: £9.95

It's been a while since the days of *Sidewinder* et al, but Mastertronic have decided to dip their toes back in the 16-bit budget waters with the unusual shoot-em-up, *Chase*.

Featuring four separate sections, *Chase* puts the player in charge of a space fighter, battling against the Disgusmatrons. After the fourth, the sections cycle round again.



Taking a front-seat view of the action, the player has to chase the enemy through a meteor shower, fly through towers slalom-fashion, pass through a *Master of the Lamps*-style series of squares, and finally continue the chase along a vast corridor, weaving between obstacles and shooting Digusmatrons en route.

Apart from superior sound on the Amiga, both versions are identical in looks and gameplay. The 3D graphics are smooth and fast, and although the action is rather repetitive, *Chase* isn't a bad return for a tenner.

■ ACE RATING 680

REBELSTAR II

917

SILVERBIRD ● Spectrum: £1.99

Take charge of the Rebelstar Raiders once more in this sequel to the magnificent cult skirmish game *Rebelstar*.

All the old faves are there, this time out to destroy an alien race on the planet Thray 6. Points are awarded for each alien killed, with extra points for the alien queen who's the prime target. Use the available limited movement points well, and keep pushing because there are only 26 game turns in which to achieve the objective and get the Raiders back into the shuttle before it blasts off.

Rebelstar II has everything the first game had: all the addiction, excitement and fun. If you loved the original you can't afford to miss this. And if you missed the first game, you'll find *Rebelstar II* so playable and enjoyable you'll be waiting on tenterhooks, like the rest of us, for *Rebelstar III*.

INTO AFRICA

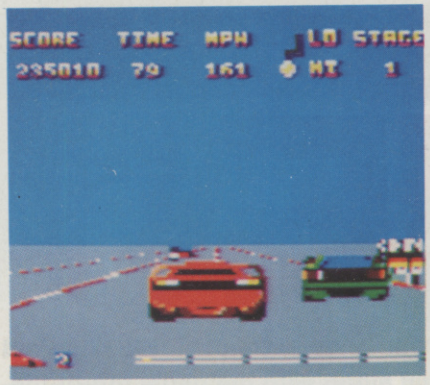
RACK-IT ● Spectrum: £2.99

Any adventurers longing for the heady days of *Lords of Midnight* should welcome this budget release with open arms. *Into Africa* is menu-driven and features a landscaping technique almost identical to Mike Singleton's megagame.

Taking individual control of up to 40 characters, the player must coordinate their combined efforts in an effort to protect an area of Africa from invading rebel tribesmen. However, the tribes indigenous to the region have been divided by the loss of the Golden Mask. Only once the mask has been found will the tribes be reunited and strong enough to fend off the rebel forces. And just to make matters worse, their leader Chief Kasula is dying from a rare jungle fever. Oh, dear.

Into Africa isn't quite as easy to operate as was its inspiration, due to a tedious menu system. However, the game is pretty captivating, and at only three quid...

■ ACE RATING 881



TWIN TURBO V8

CODE MASTERS ● Amstrad: £2.99

The Ferrari on the pack gives away the fact that this is an *Out Run* clone. The inlay also provides the enlightening information that it is an F40 and that there are only four in Britain, two owned by members of Pink Floyd.

There are five stages to drive through but no junctions at which to choose the route. The chunky graphics are colourful and fast-moving, but the inclusion of hills means it's sometimes impossible to see where you're going.

Other cars don't move around much, but they can come in sufficient numbers to cause problems. Each stage must be completed within a time limit and there's also a limit on the number of crashes allowed. Stages don't vary much, except for one at night. You'll finish the game quickly, but enjoy it while it lasts.

■ ACE RATING 564

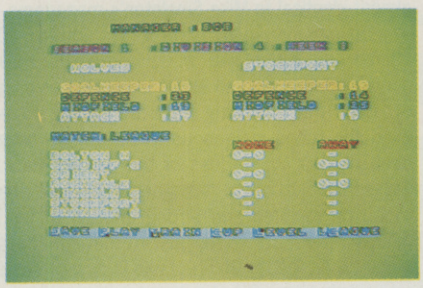
SOCCER Q

CULT ● Spec, C64, Amstrad: £2.99

Here's a new twist in soccer management games, entirely based on quiz questions, with four cut-down divisions of eight teams each, and both FA and League cup competitions.

There's no messing around picking the team, but training can improve what's there to start with. The quiz questions all take the same form: a multiple-choice selection of four answers, one of which has to be picked before a time limit runs out. In the training rounds a correct answer improves the team's rating and a wrong one reduces it.

During matches, the questions determine whether a goal is scored or not. If the opposition are attacking and you answer correctly it's a save. If your team is attacking, a correct answer will score a goal.



A base of 2,000 questions should keep the game fresh and interesting for a while, but there is little else to draw you back after they have been exhausted.

■ ACE RATING 593

ON THE HORIZON

ZEPPELIN

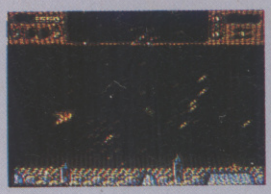
Next off the Zeppelin production line are re-releases of *Full Throttle* for the Spectrum and *Nexor* on the Spectrum and Amstrad, both at £1.99. *Jocky Wilson's Darts Challenge* will be appearing for the Amstrad and Atari 8-bit at £2.99. All these should be in the shops by now.

Zeppelin's original offerings are limited to the C64, Amstrad and Spectrum versions of *Ninja Commandos*, another £2.99 release. Coded by Kevin Franklin and Mike Owens of *Zybex* and *Draconus* fame, this should be worth adding to adding to the shoestring software collection.

RACK-IT

It's fairly quiet on the Rack-It front, with the one notable exception being a new release, called *Insects In Space*, from the Sensible Software boys.

C64 owners wanting to partake of the latest product of Chrix's and Jops's (Cuddly and Jovial, respectively) bizarre minds should check out the local software shop sometime over the next month, clutching £2.99.



Insects in Space.

CODEMASTERS

There's a quartet of new games to watch out for from the Darling camp, all at their recently-elevated price tag of £2.99.

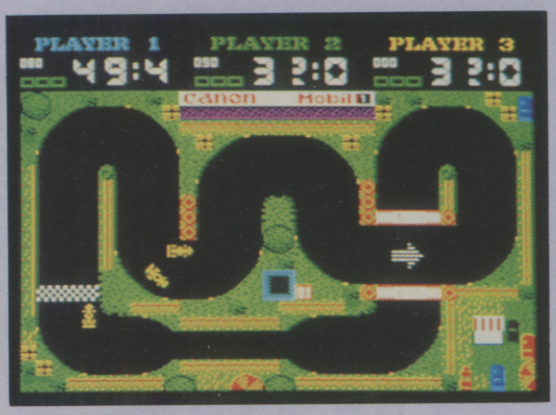
Grand Prix Simulator 2 is a follow-up to... well, guess. Featuring improved graphics and control plus a three player mode, this is one for Amstrad and Spectrum owners to keep a sharp look out for.

Commodore owners feeling left out can always take solace in *Rally Cross Simulator* for the C64. Brainchild of Gavin Raeburn, this eight-way scrolling *Hot Rod* variant contains high-quality sprites (multi-colour with hi-res), intelligent opponents and progressive customisation of the player's car.

Meanwhile, the prolific Oliver Twins have *Fast Food* ready to serve up for Amstrad and Spectrum owners. Basically a *Pac Man* variant, the game looks smart and has a few nice touches nonetheless.

Street Gang Soccer.

Finally, football fans wishing to add just one more soccer game to their bulging collection can play *Street Gang Football*, where the opposing teams are two gangs of kids. The inevitable arguments and fight scenes are included in the proceedings.



Grand Prix Simulator 2.

ENCORE

Encore give 8-bitters the chance to catch up on some earlier releases with *Grand National* (Spec); *Batty* (C64, Ams, Spec), and Durrel's *Turbo Esprit* (C64, Ams, Spec). All three are due for a mid-April launch and a £1.99 price tag.

Meanwhile *Bombjack II* (C64, Ams, Spec); *Rollercoaster* (Spectrum), and *1942* (C64, Spec, Ams) should all be sitting on a shelf near you now, just waiting to be bought.

PLAYERS

Interceptor's budget section is about to launch a new label, called Players Premier. Dealing with totally new software for £2.99, they offer seven new games to watch out for, including – deep breath – *Street Cred Football* (Spec, Ams); *Eagle Storm* (Spec, C64); *Battle Truck* (Spec, C64); *Vietnam Gunboat* (Spec, C64); *Street Cred Boxing* (C64); *Taskforce* (Spec); *and Subway Vigilante* (Spec, C64).

Fast Food.

OFFICIAL

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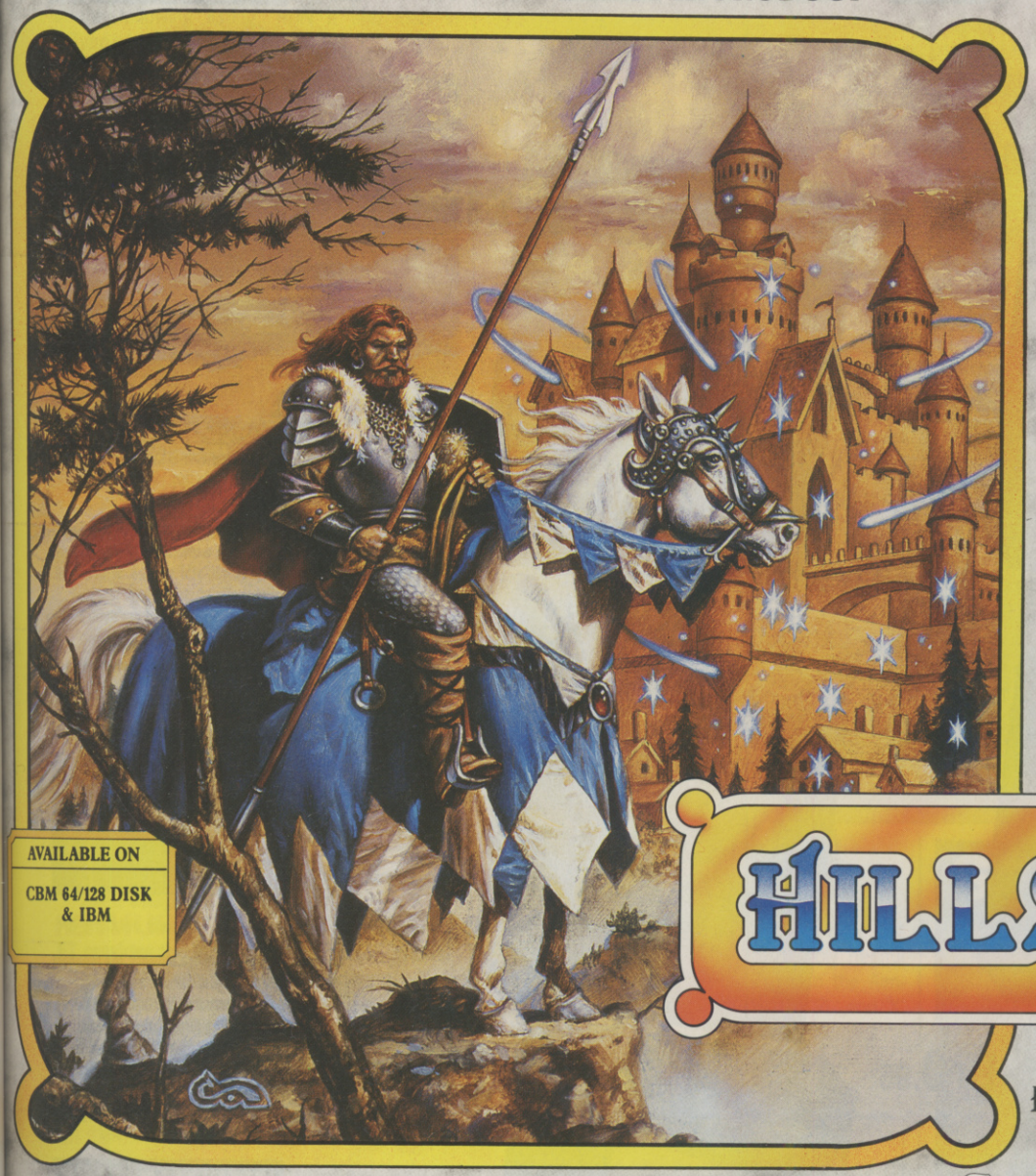

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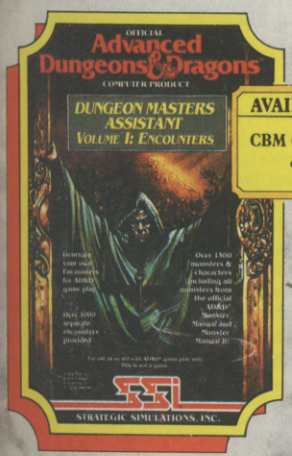

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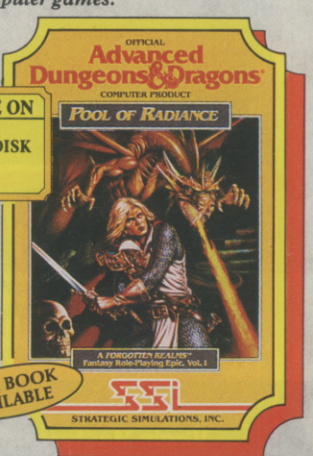

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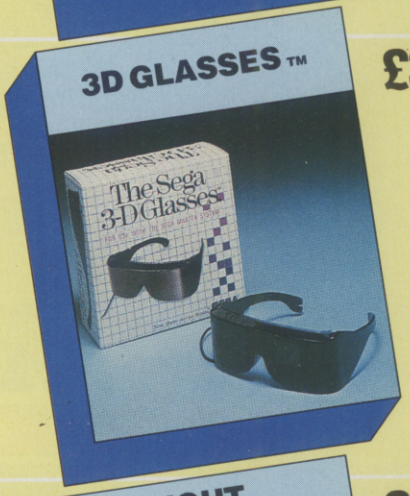

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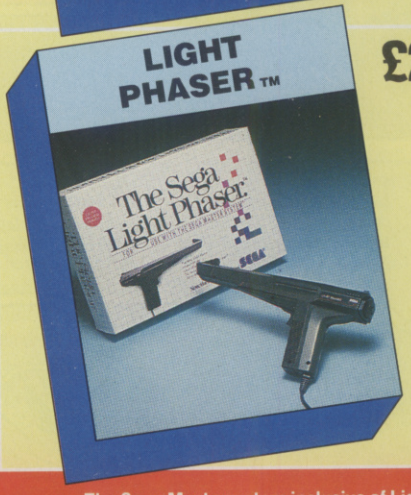

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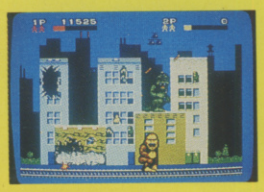


RAMPAGE

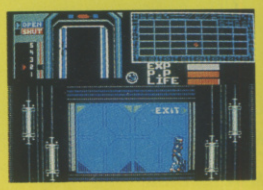
You and your buddy are ready for a little action tonight 'cause you just happen to be in the mood to tear up the town. You'll demolish buildings, grab and chomp horrified spectactors and other yummy morsels, and flatten puny helicopters and other antagonists who try to stop you!

Addictive gameplay, marvellous graphics combined with originality and a great sense of humour! C+VG, March 1989

'R' TYPE

They came from a Dimensional plane clear across the galaxy, wreaking havoc and chaos from star system to star system. With an evil that smothers all resistance with fear and terror, the horrid creatures of the Bydo Empire are now knocking on, Earth's front door.

Is by far the best blast available on the Sega, so it goes without saying that no shoot 'em up fan should be without it! C+VG, March 1989



CYBORG HUNTER

The year, 2242 you are Paladin, the toughest bounty hunter in the galaxy. Monstrous Cybags are threatening to take control of the Universe under the direction of their evil leader, Vipron. Yoúr mission is to gain access to Vipron's chambers and destroy him. Sound easy enough? It isn't!

Horizontally scrolling arcade adventure, action packed! C+VG, March 1989

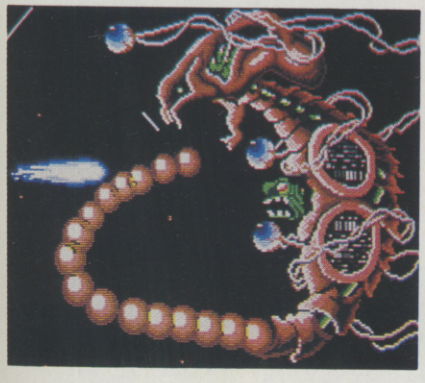
Y's

You are Aron Christian, a swordsman washed ashore by the might and fury of a hurricane. You were found half dead by a kind and humble fisherman and he restored you to health. The fishing village sat at the edge of the great plain. Rising in the distance was a small mountain range with an ominous tower at its peak. 'That is the Tower of the Doomed,' the fisherman told you as they made the sign of the evil eye. 'It is the place where the troubles of our land began.' As you watched the tower, you knew that your destiny waited there.

The whole thing looks incredible – the best I've seen on the Sega. Y's offers depth and playability and will keep you engrossed for weeks. It's a must! C+VG, March 1989

R-TYPE

C64 fans of the Irem arcade blaster can now do battle against the evil Bydo empire safe in the knowledge that they have infinite R-9s. Type in the following listing, RUN it and load in *R-Type* when prompted.



```
10 FOR X=512 TO 540: READY: C=C+Y:
   POKE X,Y: NEXT
20 IF C=2782 THEN SYS512
30 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA"
40 DATA 169, 128, 133, 157, 32, 104, 225,
   169, 2, 141, 111, 8, 76, 14, 8
50 DATA 72, 77, 80, 169, 173, 141, 93, 50,
   141, 157, 50, 76, 18, 8
```

■ The Master Hacker

And just to make things easier for the ST R-Typers, here's a cheat: when prompted to insert Disk Two, press the 'HELP' key and type 'ME'. Press the up arrow key and carry on loading the game as normal. During play, the function keys now have specific effects...

F5 makes the R-9 invulnerable to walls, alien weapons and ships.
F6 makes the R-9 impervious to alien fire.
F7 provides the player with unlimited credits.
F8 allows the orb to be controlled by a second player, using the mouse to move the orb, and the left button to fire.

■ Tony Hanson, Greater Manchester

TNT

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

DRAGON NINJA

To give the C64 Bad Dude a helping hand in his mission to rescue Ronnie, try typing out the listing below, RUNing it and loading the game on cassette.

```
10 DATA 103, 176, 189, 133, 252, 25, 210, 31, 247, 83, 43, 120
20 DATA 52, 88, 43, 120, 52, 88, 223, 194, 254, 140
30 DATA 105, 161, 252, 169, 149, 188, 126, 172, 111, 97, 127
40 DATA 198, 52, 200, 126, 85, 75, 94, 141, 214, 56, 177, 63, 227
50 DATA 154, 100, 63, 42, 37, 47, 70, 107, 156, 216, 32, 114
60 FOR N=320 TO 378: READ A: X=X+A: POKE N,A: NEXT N
70 IF X=7255 THEN SYS 320
```

■ Idris Mohammed, Luton

FALCON

As if Uncle Tom Watson's mega-helpful hints last issue weren't enough, here's a terribly helpful cheat for the ST version: to replenish the Aim-9Ls and the cannon, simply press 'CTRL' and 'X' at the same time.

■ Jas King, N Ireland

SPECTRUM

Judging from a variety of letters T'N'T has received, it seems that stages from many multiload games can be loaded in the wrong order. One instance of this phenomenon is Ocean's *Operation Wolf*. Load the 128 version in 48K mode (it takes ages) and the first level to appear is Level Six!

A similar effect is found with Martech's *Hellfire Attack*: load in the first level and play it, making sure that the toll count is at 00 by shooting enough aircraft. Once the level has been completed the prompt 'Searching, Level Two' comes up. Press play until it changes to 'Loading', then stop the tape and fast forward to another level. The new level should now load in OK.

NOTE: if the game asks for a specific level, such as 'River', the header of that level must be loaded first. After that, any other level can be loaded instead.

FLYING SHARK

The latest 16-bit versions of the Taito coin-op are a mite tricky. Wouldn't life be a lot easier with a good dose of the cheats? To enable the following effects on the ST and Amiga, you first have to obtain a high score – this is fine on the Amiga, but ST owners have to work a bit harder here.

Once the high score table appears, use the following three-letter codes holding down '5' on the numeric keypad as the last letter is entered.

	AMIGA	*ST*
Aciiiiiiiiid!	**RLH**	**–**
Full fire power	**JGL**	**J-H**
Unlimited lives	**KDJ**	**KDJ**
Invulnerability	**RAB**	**HSC**

Try obtaining full fire power first in order to obtain a sufficiently high score to enter the other codes.

The Shark in happy mode!

■ Derek Meachin, Cheshire & The ACE team

PETER BEARDSLEY'S SOCCER

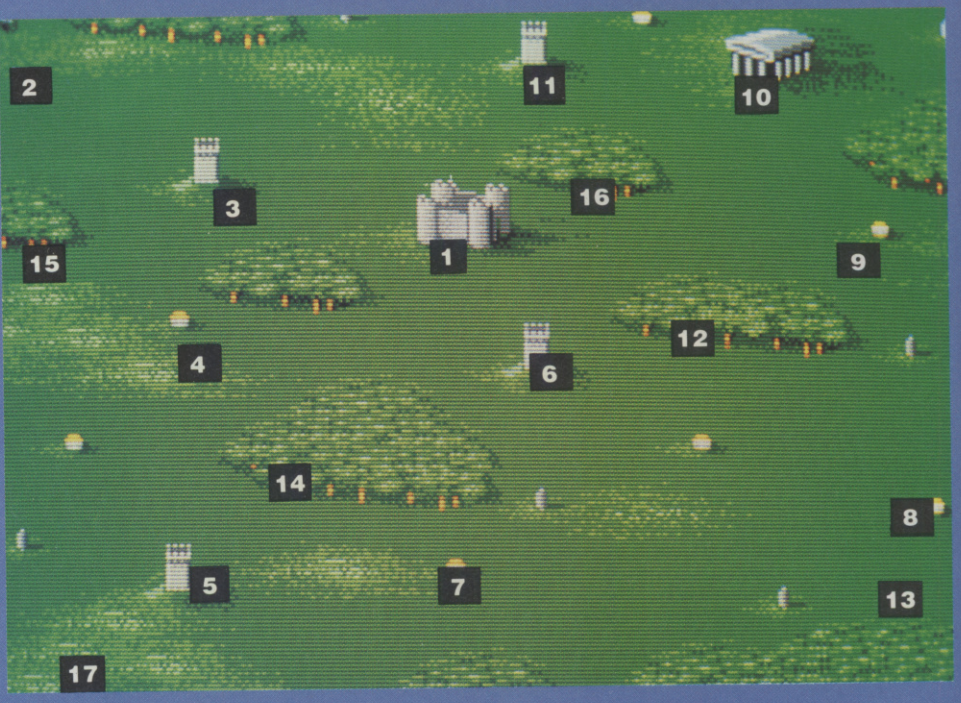
A handy tip for Amiga owners. Continual tapping of the fire button while in possession of the ball prevents any other players from tackling.

■ Steven Worthington, County Durham

GALDREGON'S

THE LAND OF MEZRON

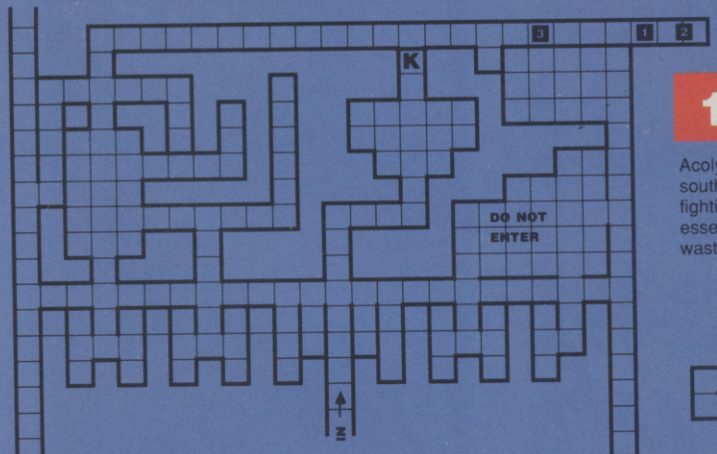
3 Tower of the Necromancer
4 Viking's Hut
5 Lord Thrull's Tower
6 Ghost's Tower
7 Arch-Mage's Hut
8 Cleric's Hut
9 Wise man's Hut
II Tower of the Demon Master



The Lich at 2 has one of the Gems. The centre Wraith at 3 has the key to the door at 1; the other Wraiths only have light scrolls.

The Castle of King Rohan

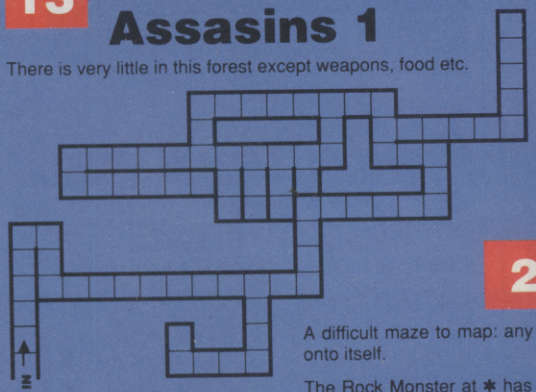
1 Locked Door
2 Lich
3 Wraiths
K King Rohan

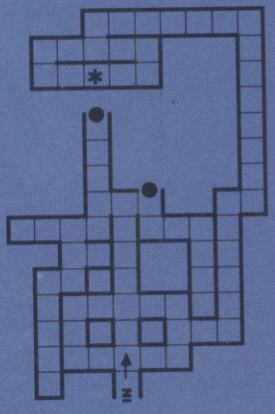


1 Various potions and scrolls can be gained by killing the Priests and Acolytes in the rooms to the south of the castle. However, fighting in the castle is not essential to win the game, and wastes health in the process.

13 Forest of Assasins 1

There is very little in this forest except weapons, food etc.





2 The Caves of Doom

A difficult maze to map: any of the dot-marked routes eventually loops back onto itself.

The Rock Monster at * has a Gem. The diamond needed to kill it is carried by a dwarf or ogre, elsewhere in the caves.

Head for the Arch-Mage's hut and get the Spell Book, go to the Viking's Hut and get his sword, and then go to the Wise Man's Hut and collect the Teleport Ring.

Go to the Tower of the Demon Master, kill both the Demon and the Master before getting the cross and any other objects. Go to point 3 in Rohan's Castle, kill the centre Wraith and get the key. Go east, open the door and kill all the characters, including the Lich. If there are too many Guards with the Lich, wait outside its chamber until most have left. Collect Gem One, Wand, etc.

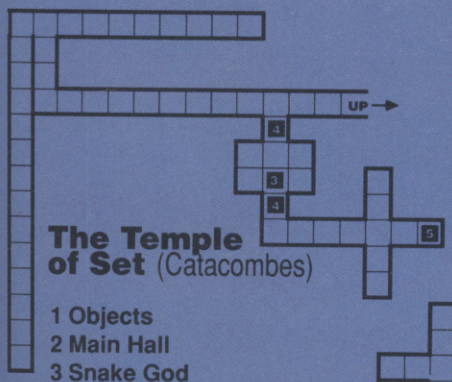
Go to the Temple and pick up all the objects at point 1. Stock up on weapons, food, potions and scrolls by killing Guards. Get the dagger and key from the Priests in Room Two. Use the scrolls where possible, since the Priests inflict heavy damage. Go down into the catacombs and head for point 5, killing the Snake God on the way. Kill the Demon and Guards. Collect Gem Two and any other items.

Go to the Caves of Doom, wander around killing Ogres and other creatures until the Diamond is found. Head for point and kill the Rock Monster. Collect Gem Three.

Go to the Labyrinth, kill Minotaurs until the Mirror and Key are found. Move to point *, kill the Medusa and collect Gem Four.

Finally, enter the Forest (15), find the Elf Lord at point *, and kill him. Get the Elven Cloak. Go to the Forest of Assassins – One (13). Go to point *, kill Assassin Chief, collect Gem Five and then return to King Rohan. Game over.

SDOMAIN



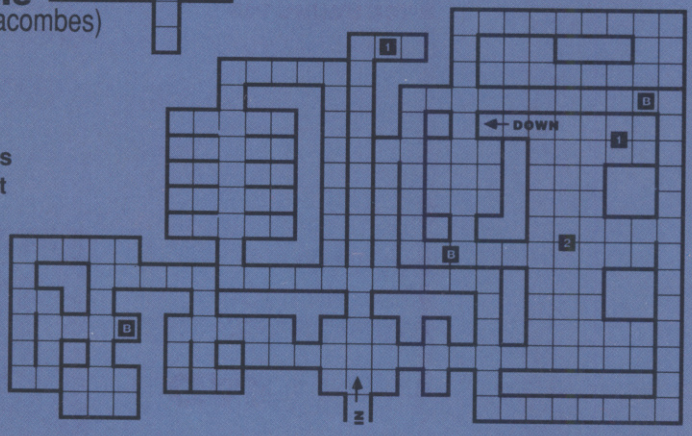
10 The Temple of Set (Ground Level)

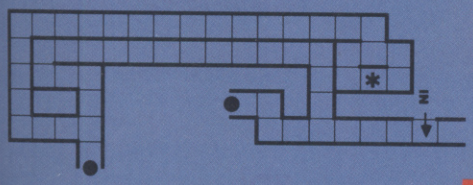
Food and other items can be found at points marked '1'. Guards in the Temple are a good source of food, weapons, potions etc. The Bugs affect movement, but don't really harm the Barbarian.

The Temple of Set (Catacombes)

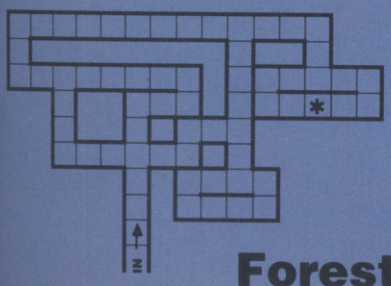
1 Objects
2 Main Hall
3 Snake God
4 Locked Doors
5 Demon of Set
B Bugs

In the Main Hall, 2, the Priests and other characters must be killed to find the Ceremonial Dagger and the Key to the doors at 4. The demon at 5 has the Gem.



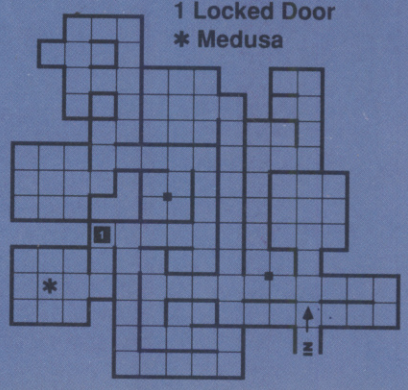


14 Forest of Assasins 2



17 The Labrynth of Medusa

1 Locked Door
*** Medusa**



Forests

12 15 16

This map is identical for the three forests. In the Forest of the (Good) Elves, the Elven Cloak is with the Elf Lord at point *.

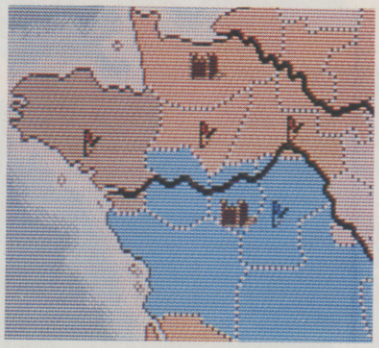
GENERAL TIPS

- Don't fight anything unless objects are needed or the Barbarian is attacked first.
- Keep strength and stamina levels high. It is often possible to kill an enemy before it hits the Barbarian at all.
- The most effective weapons are the Halberds, Death Scrolls and Wands.
- Lord Thull and his men can be killed for extra weapons, and the same goes for the creatures in the Necromancer's Tower.

The secret to solving the mission is that a specific object must be carried to kill each of the characters owning a gem, thus:

Cross – *Lich*
Diamond – *Rock Monster*
Elven Cloak – *Assassin Chief*
Mirror – *Medusa*
Ceremonial Dagger – *Demon of Set*

JOAN OF ARC



ST and Amiga owners should now sit quietly and read the following solution to Rainbow Arts' 16-bit strategy arcade game...

At the start of the game select 'Start A Campaign' from the main menu, then select 'Displacement' from the second menu to enable movement of the army into another province.

Moving into Orleanais sees the 'Battle in Open Country' arcade game begin (see hints below).

On defeating the enemy, select 'Offensive' from the 'Start A Campaign' menu, and choose Orleans. The 'Entry Into Town' and 'Taking of the Wall' arcade sections begin (see hints below). Orleans must be taken before Joan can move to Rheims to crown the King.

After the fall of Orleans, move into the Province of Champagne. Move the army north and attack each Province in turn, taking all towns and fortresses in each before moving on. Once the northernmost Province has been taken, move southwards repeating the process.

Use hostages to make money to pay the army. Select 'Liberation' from the 'Diplomacy' menu, deal with Henry VI exclusively, use Tremoille and Regnault of Chartres as ambassadors and use the following list as a guide to the amount of ransom to demand:

Duke of Bedford	**£4,000,000**
Duke of Warwick	**£2,000,000**
Duke of Gloucester	**£2,000,000**
Captain Falstaff	**£1,000,000**
Count of Suffolk	**£1,000,000**
John Talbot	**£1,000,000**
Cardinal of Winchester	**£1,000,000**

Ransom these characters only; if any other people are captured simply execute them using the 'Royal Justice' menu.

If there are no hostages in the prison when it comes to pay day for the armies, select 'Helping Hand' and kidnap one. Do not try for the Duke of Bedford, though, since this attempt is the one most likely to fail. Remember to pay the Helping Hand well: £20,000 should do it.

Joan does not need an immense army to succeed: 2,000 archers and 3,000 troops are enough. Mortars are also useful, but don't waste money on knights – they are expensive and aren't really needed.

Don't waste time on taxes: collect only the Tithe tax when it is due in September. The amount

isn't enough to pay the armies, but at least it avoids any uprisings.

If a large army is in evidence, remember to evaporate it during any diplomatic bargaining, or else lots of money is lost unnecessarily.

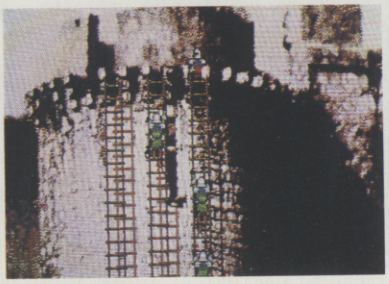
THE ARCADE SECTIONS

ENTRY INTO TOWN

Once this has loaded in, and before the screen changes, push right to get the man off to a running start, and keep pushing right all the time. When in combat range, press the fire button and keep it pressed until the enemy is defeated, and release it. The man then runs forward again until in combat range, and so on. Repeat this process until the town is entered.

TAKING OF THE WALL

As with 'Entry Into Town', start the man off before the screen changes and push the joystick forwards. The man should be halfway up the ladder before the first stone is thrown. Keep pushing up for the whole of the game, and use the fire button to shield the soldier from rocks.



DEFENCE OF THE WALL

This is the one to master, since more enemy soldiers are destroyed this way than any other. Push the joystick forwards and press fire before the screen changes, to immediately start launching rocks. Use rocks wherever possible; otherwise use oil if time is short. Although the manual states that oil is limited, there are at least six cauldrons of oil at Joan's disposal.

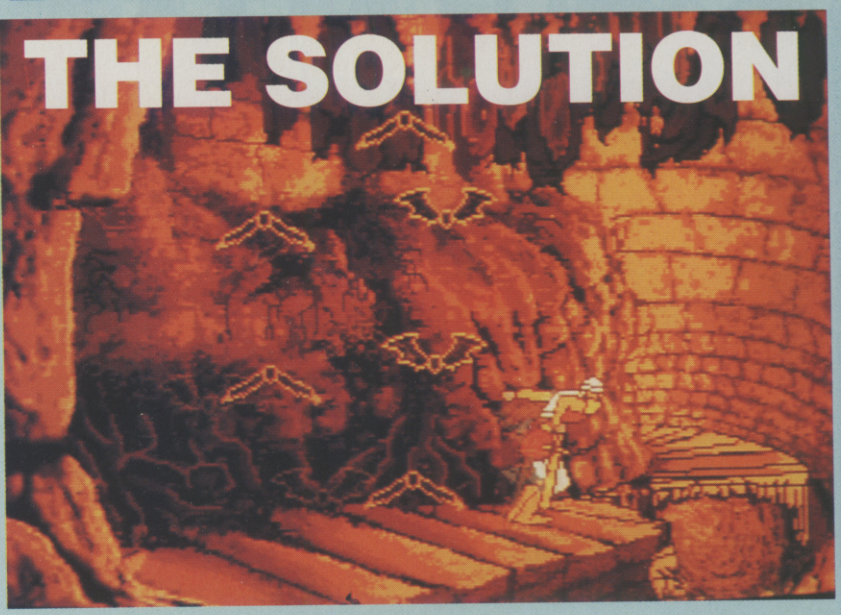
■ Bill Wernham, Invernesshire & P Gregg, Surrey

WINNERS

The £150 Top prize this month goes to T Bourne of Manchester for his complete solution and maps for Galdregon's Domain.
£20 runner-up vouchers are awarded to Andrew Harden, Essex; Andrew Martley, London; Bill Wernham, Invernesshire; Idris Mohammed, Luton and Ole Grytdal of sunny Norway.
And many thanks to everyone else.

DRAGON'S LAIR

THE SOLUTION



Judging by the amount of interest caused by this release, almost anyone with an Amiga and 1Meg upgrade already possesses this game. The following tips on how to defeat Singe might also come in useful if and when the ST version appears.

Try to enter each command just before Dirk has executed the last. Note that many scenes are played twice, the second scene simply being the mirror image of the first.

DISK 1

The Drawbridge(s)
When the tentacles approach, swing the sword. As they dodge away, push up to climb through the hole.

Room
After the 'Drink Me' sign flashes, the door will flash. Immediately push right.

DISK 2

Dirk enters either a room or a cave containing a monster...

Cave
If entering from the right, go left, right then left as soon as the steps flash. Go the opposite way if entering from the left.

Room
If the door is on the inner right-hand side, as soon as the tentacle drops down, press fire then push up, right, down, left and up. If the door is on the inner left, press fire, and push up, left, down, right and up.

DISK 3

The quest continues with either whirlpools and rapids, or a room with a cauldron...

Whirlpools and Rapids
Simply move left and right away from the whirlpools. Dealing with the rapids requires more precise timing: if the first whirlpool encountered was on the left, then Dirk will emerge into the rapids on the left, and vice versa. Push left and up to get to the next screen, then press up once more (do the reverse if entering on the right). This procedure is repeated four times.

Cauldron Room
Watch Dirk walk over to the bottles on the table. As he picks one up, a monster appears, grabs him and the screen changes. As soon as it has changed, press fire to chop the dragon's head off.

DISK 4

The Knight
If the knight is holding his sword in his right hand, move right, left, up, left, right, left and right. Should the sword be in the knight's left hand, then move left, right, up, right, left, right and left. When a close-up of the knight appears, press the fire button. Timing is essential on this section: attempt to enter the next command just before Dirk lands on the floor.

The Balls
Relatively easy: just press down when the small one passes Dirk.
Repeat for all six balls.

DISK 5

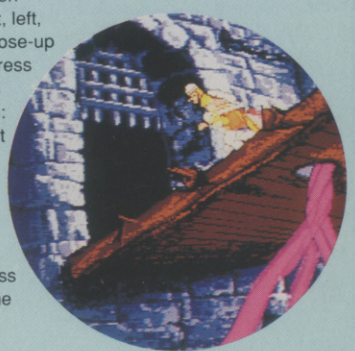
Room
Keep pushing up until Dirk has left the room. This scene occurs twice.

Dragon's Lair
A pile of moving objects appear. If they are on the right, go right, then left and down. If the objects appear on the left, move left, then right and down.
On the next screen, press down to catch the falling objects.
Finally, keep pressing fire when the princess says 'Use the magic sword.'

DISK 6

The Final Battle
Move down to avoid the clutches of the dragon, then move (either left or right as necessary) toward the dragon's head. When Dirk has taken the magic sword, press down to avoid the dragon's attack.
Do this three times, and as the scene changes, press the fire button to throw the sword at the dragon and kill him.

■ Ole Grytdal, Norway



BEWARE - ON THE RIP ROARING STREETS OF..

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'hicago – city of gangsters and guns – where
lone detective Eliot mounts his crusade
nst the lawless mob. From the dingy docks
ugh the murky outskirts and into the sleazy
tself, then finally the illegal booze warehouse,
t sticks to a trail terrorised by mob hitmen –
ping out of the sewers, hidden in the buildings
areering along in black Bugattis.

***IED WITH MACHINE GUN, CACHE
GRENADES AND CUSTOMISED
EVROLET, NOW REALLY IS THE CHANCE
PUT YOUR BULLETS WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS
OR YOUR MOUTH MAY REST FOR EVER.***

YOU'RE TOP OF THE HIT LIST!!!

Screenshots from Amstrad version

U.S. GOLD

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SEGA SPECIAL

T'N'T has had a tremendous response, over the last month or so, from Sega owners sending in hints and tips for a variety of games. And so, to do them all justice, here's a special section for Sega-loving games players everywhere...

ALEX KIDD IN MIRACLE WORLD

At the end of Lake Fathom, Gooseka appears. To win, choose Stone, Scissors. On the island of St Nurari, the shop sells the Sukopako Motorcycle, the Teleport Powder and the Power Bracelet. At the end, when Saint Nurari appears, take the Peticopter.

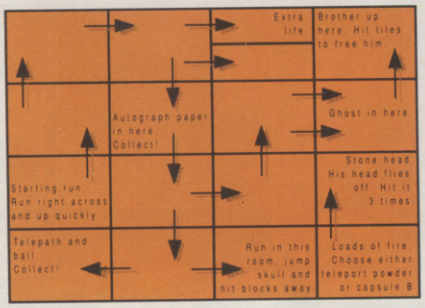
At the start of the Village of Namui, there is a shop which sells the Peticopter, Magic Capsule A and another life for Alex. At the end of the level, a boar runs on: punch him on the nose eight times. Saint Nurari also appears again.

On reaching the end of Mount Knave, Chokkina appears: choose Scissors, Paper. The shop sells the Motorcycle, the Cane of Flight and Magic Capsule A.

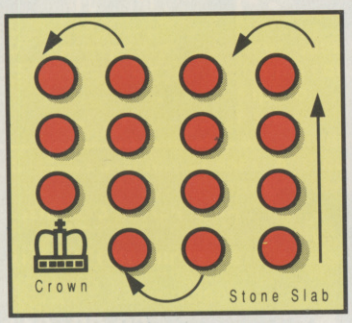
In the Blakwoods, Janken comes on. Hit him eight times when his sword is pointing up.

On the Bingoo Lowlands, the shop sells the Peticopter, Magic Capsule B and the Teleport Powder. At the end of the level, Parplin appears: choose Stone, Scissors.

On reaching Radactian Castle, run right across and up the ladder, since a ghost immediately comes after Alex.



To get the crown,enter the room with the symbols on the floor and jump on them in the order that they are shown on the 'Stone Slab', when read as shown:



The game may actually be completed without defeating Janken, due to a bug. Save the Levitation Staff then, when the Princess first appears, use it straight away. Fly up to the ladder in the corner and Janken cannot kill Alex.

■ Andrew Harden, Essex & Anon, Dudley

ALEX KIDD: THE LOST STARS

Whenever Alex is low on energy, collect an [SC] symbol, then fall off into the air. When Alex reappears, go back to the location where the [SC] was, and collect it again. Continually repeat the process until Alex's energy is back up to maximum.

On nearing the end of a level, edge slowly towards the exit sign. When it is just on screen, allow Alex to die and then make a dash for the exit, without stopping or killing anything. This works on all levels except the machine/robot one.

■ Stefan Borson, Manchester & Andre Martley, London

FANTASY ZONE II

On Level Two, walk along the ground and continue to bomb, until a red bottle appears. Pick it up and the ship is rewarded with extra fuel capacity.

Find the red warp on Level Three, then go to the shop and buy a laser. Head for the scenery which is made up of diamond-shaped rocks, then position the ship at the bottom half of the screen. Shoot, and a clock should appear which, when collected, gives another 10 seconds when dealing with the end-of-level guardian.

On Level Four, there's a blue bottle on the warp with lots of straight edges and flames, just above the floor. The bottle is located to the left of the warp hole near the top of the screen. Once collected, it replenishes all the ship's energy.

Keep shooting the black hole on Level Seven to collect another clock, and there's also a red bottle located on the warp with the red exit. Just keep shooting the ground as in Level Three.

■ Anon, Dudley

PHANTASY STAR

Farmers and Barbarians can be spoken to using 'Talk'. Creatures which may not be spoken to include Zombies, Ant-lions, Skeletons, Swarms, Giant Flies, Titans, Scorpions, Bats, Vampires, Elephants, Frostmen and Mammoths.

Battle with the following creatures can be avoided by casting spells:

Tele	*Chat*
Sphinx	**Manticore**
Centaur	**Tarantul**
Dezorian	**Horseman**
Any dragons	
(except Cusba)	

The secret item in the shop is a roadmap (keep on coming back and demanding it).

To find Myau, take the Lac pot to the merchant on the desert planet. Say 'no' and then trade the pot. Head home and enter the cave, south of the wall.

Upon reaching Odin's statue, use the Asulin, then find the compass in the maze.

The Governor's cake is in Nuala, a cave north of the starting position.

The Hapsby is found by melting the pile with the blue door.

If you do not have the Mirror Shield, kill Medusa by casting Rope spells which stops her from striking back.

To get to Lassic's Palace, get to the Apex of Baya Malay, use the Prism, use the nuts and kill the Golden Dragon.

Get the hovercraft by pleading ignorance in Casba Town. It can then be found near the Hapsby.

Go south of Scion (in the water) and get the Gas Shield from Atlantis.

The Mirror Shield is on Motovia. First pay 400 gold in the Gas Town and then go into the lake. The Shield is found by searching on a southern cactus.

Don't despair if Darkfulz seems invulnerable: keep shooting and the game should soon be complete.

LOCATION OF ITEMS:

LAC SHIELD
Bottom of a Dezorian cave.

LAC ARMOUR
The far side of a pit trap in the Dezorian cave, Guaron.

PRISM
Found by killing the two Titans in the Dezorian prison camp.

CRYSTAL
The Seer in Baya Malay has it.

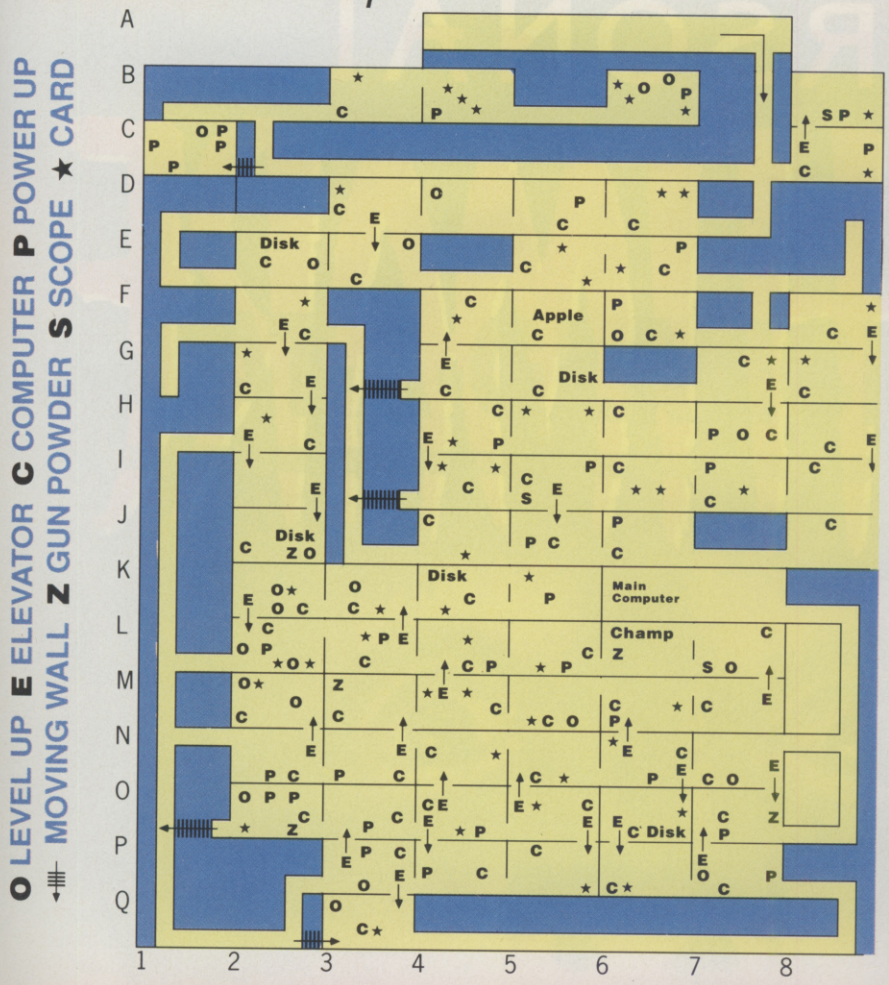
TORCH
Trade the Casba gem for this on Dezoris. It's in the red maze, inside the tower.

LAC AXE
Medusa guards it in her new tower.

MIRACLE KEY
Found near the top of Baya Malay.

■ Andre Martley London

ZILLION *the map*



ZILLION

To make JJ, Apple or Champ indestructible, follow this method:

Start off by getting a few ID cards. Carry on into the game until JJ reaches room D3 (on map). Go up the elevator to the room above, where there should be a laser barrier right in front of him. Slowly walk into it, but don't go right through. When JJ's energy level falls below 160 – careful! – walk just into the barrier and press down. If JJ falls back into the room below and has no energy, he will now be indestructible. However, while indestructible, JJ cannot go to the status screen.

■ Andrew Harden, Essex & Paul Wintle, Essex

ZILLION II

To defeat Baron Ricks without being hurt, move to the right-hand side-wall. As he approaches, keep running right as he tries to touch JJ. When he misses, turn around and shoot him while jumping.

■ Andre Martley, London

KENSEIDEN

On Level Two, climb up the big Buddha and push up. A secret room is then entered where energy can be replenished. Doing the same on Level Nine transports you to the next Buddha.

Strike the Firewheel Demon anywhere.

Strike the Robed Demon with the club in the knees. This can be done by standing on the floor, so there is no need to jump.

To kill the Hydra warlock, hit her in the face (arc-slashes are very effective).

Destroy the Larvae Fly Demon by first arc-slashing its abdomen, then hitting the abdomen when its back is turned.

The Skull Demon should be tackled only once a medicine cabinet has been collected: jump and slash the Demon while it is whole. Use the same tactics for the Giant Eye Demon.

Yonesa – the Warlock in Edo – is killed by destroying his fireballs. The slash movement is most effective here (push up and fire).

The Master Demon is the last to be defeated. Ignore the boulders, stand up close and wait for him to fire. When his arms return, quickly super-jump and strike him in the face. The MD should turn blue, then eventually into a skull. He may then be critically wounded while in skull form.

■ Andre Martley, London

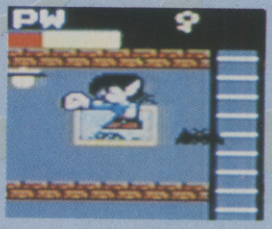
SHORTS

ACTION FIGHTER

To get rid of the helicopter when driving the car, simply turn into the motorbike and back again.

■ Andre Martley, London

GHOST HOUSE



Punch the lightbulbs to freeze all the characters on-screen. This only works three times per level.

■ Andre Martley, London

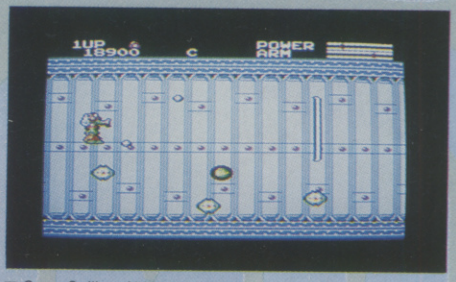
THUNDERBLADE

When approaching the end-of-level fortress, move up to either top corner and sit there. The fortress should now blow up without having to touch it.

■ Stefan Borson, Manchester

TRANSBOT

On reaching the first city, three devices appear called Hiluns. If they are blasted with weapon system 'D', the mission should then continue on the underground level.



■ Sean Collins, N Humberside

CAPTAIN SILVER

To utilise the continue option, push up and press both buttons at the same time. This works on all levels past the first one, and restarts the game at the start of each level.

■ Paul Tootell, Bolton

CHOPLIFTER

Shoot the enemy's first rocket base several times and, after a while, Superman appears. The prisoners will now run twice as fast.

■ Asad Habib, Sheffield

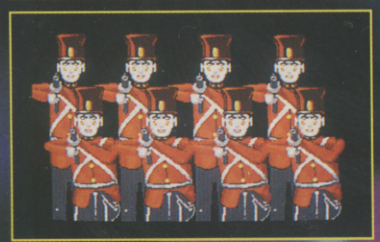
WONDER BOY

Watch out for handbags or other items when gathering the fruit. If the extra object is collected, Wonderboy is transported to a bonus level. If he should die there no lives are lost: he just gets transported back to where he collected the object.

■ Sean Collins, Humberside

SEGA TIPS NEXT MONTH:
GOLVELLIUS, WONDERBOY IN MONSTERLAND – AND MORE...

PERSONAL NIGHTMARE



There's something very strange going on. It's as if you are living through your worst nightmare and unable to wake up. Won't anyone let you in on the terrible secret that haunts your waking moments.

Personal Nightmare is the new brain child of HORROR SOFT. A new kind of icon-driven, animated game that has been written using the new especially developed Agos language.

Personal Nightmare is highly original using all the features of the 16-bit micro. The superb, fully animated graphics, backed by incredible sound effects come together with a highly sophisticated user interface to give total involvement of a new dimension.

Personal Nightmare will introduce you to numerous characters including:

The Landlord of the Dog and Duck
Jimmy Blandford and his attractive wife Susan
Alice Greenwoood
The local village policeman
and a host of other inhabitants who will share in your *Personal Nightmare.*

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UPDATES: AN AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE

PROSPECTOR IN THE MAZES OF XOR

UPDATE SPECIAL

LOGOTRON £19.95dk
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 1 – ACE rating 927

Back in Issue One this was just known as *Xor*. Now on the Amiga it has gained a much longer title and many extra features.

The graphics and sound have of course been massively improved: it's bye-bye to chickens and fish and hello to rocks and Zeppelins. Along with bombs, walls, spheres, power fields and teleporters these combine to form some of the most devilish arcade puzzles known to mankind.

You control two characters (but it's definitely just a one player game) who have to collect balloons from the mazes. At some points they have to do things separately and at others they need to work together. The objects that form the puzzles all have different behaviour patterns – Zeppelins move to the left when able, rocks fall down, spheres keep rolling when pushed, power fields can only be removed from one direction, bombs can blow holes in the walls and teleporters do what they always do.

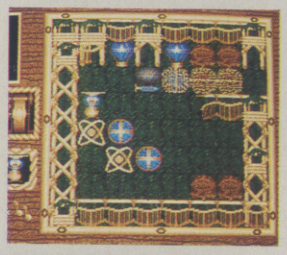
Up to now, *Xor* players will be on familiar territory, but here come the extras. There are 15 entirely new levels already programmed in and a construction set with which you can make yet more. The construction set extends the life of a game that is mightily addictive anyway. There's even the ability to multi-task with other programs, but frankly you will probably be too absorbed to want to do anything else. A superb development of what was already a classic game.

● Bob Wade

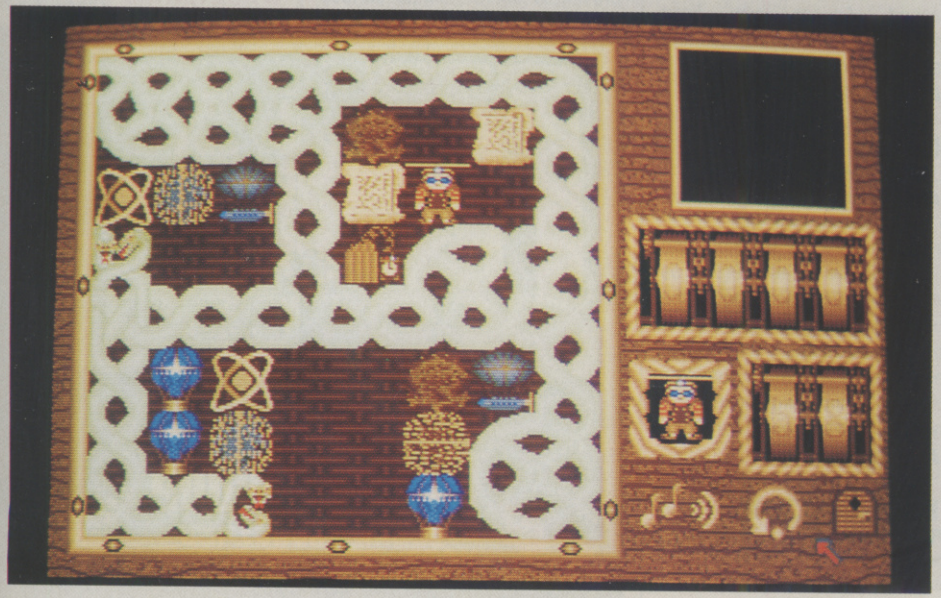
AMIGA VERSION

The graphics and music are appealing, making it more accessible than the 8-bit versions. It's not stretching the Amiga's powers that much but the rivetting gameplay is the main thing.

■ **ACE RATING 942**



(Right) Complex puzzles abound. (Below) Trapped! To blow up the dynamite, the rock has to be dropped on it by getting the map.



AMIGA

CALIFORNIA GAMES

EPYX £19.99

Compete with up to seven friends in half a dozen California-born sports. There's skateboarding on a half-pipe, the foot bag (or hacky sack as it's known over there) plus a drop of surfing, roller skating, BMXing and frisbee lobbing. Graphics are colourful but look very C64ish. It's fun to play occasionally and can be quite a laff when you play with a group of friends, but it's not advanced computer entertainment and it certainly doesn't push the Amiga to its limits.

■ **ACE RATING 630**

FIREZONE

PSS £24.99dk
Amstrad version reviewed Issue 8 – ACE rating 710

Scrolling and sound effects are much better than the 8-bit versions, but then that's only to be expected. It's a simple, well presented wargame that provides plenty of scenarios and a design option to keep you busy.

■ **ACE RATING 735**

GAUNTLET II

US GOLD £24.95dk
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 12 – ACE rating 820

As with the ST version, you can have a four player game using a special interface. Smooth multi-directional scrolling, detailed and colourful graphics, and good effects and music. Gameplay hasn't altered – same manic charging around, shooting and collecting things.

■ **ACE RATING 820**

HOSTAGES

INFOGRAMES £24.95dk
ST version reviewed Issue 15 – ACE rating 689

As in other versions, the graphics and sound are great but there's

***Space Harrier* on the Amiga: holding out for a see-through hero.**

not much in the way of gameplay once the novelty has worn off. It's also far too easy to complete to keep you playing for very long.

■ **ACE RATING 689**

IK+

SYSTEM 3 £24.99dk

The latest enhanced, improved and jazzed up version of a combat game that goes back a long way. There are three fighters, two of whom can be player-controlled. With only one player the other two

are computer-controlled, so there is still three-cornered fight action.

In between every couple of bouts there are interlude screens where bonus points are scored by deflecting bouncing balls with a shield or kicking bombs off the screen. This is the basic action, but loads of little extras have been thrown in, like strange events in the background scenery and odd control toggles.

The animated graphics are good and the presentation is superb. The gameplay is the same old combat stuff, the best of its kind, but its kind is dated.

■ **ACE RATING 722**

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SPHERE

ELECTRIC DREAMS £24.99dk
C64 version reviewed Issue 17 – ACE rating 923

The maps are the same as the C64 version. The graphics and effects are (obviously) greatly enhanced to make an even more convincing 3D effect. Gameplay is once again very tricky and the Sphere itself is slightly harder to control than its C64 twin.

■ **ACE RATING 923**

JOAN OF ARC

CHIP/US GOLD £24.99dk
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 15 – ACE rating 912

Just as pretty to look at, and the

same fine mix of strategy and arcade action, as the ST. The sound and graphics have hardly changed. Anyone who liked *Defender of the Crown* will find this much more satisfying.

■ **ACE RATING 912**

SPACE HARRIER

ELITE £19.99dk
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 15 – ACE rating 729

It's fast, graphically excellent and as close to the arcade version as can be expected. Still one of the most enjoyable mindless blasts around. As ever it's a shame that the Harrier himself often obscures the view of incoming enemies – how about a transparent hero?

■ **ACE RATING 729**

TECHNO COP

GREMLIN £19.99dk
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 16 – ACE rating 804

The driving section has been well put together – smooth roadway and nice engine noises. Action inside buildings, reminiscent of *Death Wish 3*, features exploding bodies that twitch post-mortally. The buildings map out the same, so if you can put up with the tacky, gory graphics it's got plenty of interest.

■ **ACE RATING 804**

ZANY GOLF

ELECTRONIC ARTS £24.95dk
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 19 – ACE rating 688

Same holes and graphics as the ST and like the other versions the disk accessing is annoyingly slow. Great fun until the nine-hole course is completed, which will not take that long.

■ **ACE RATING 688**

AMSTRAD

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SPHERE

ELECTRIC DREAMS £9.99cs, £14.99dk
C64 version reviewed Issue 17 – ACE rating 923

The poorest of all the versions, because it's terribly slow, making the control difficult and unrealistic. The map too has been changed. Graphics and sound are poor.

■ **ACE RATING 542**

JINKS

RAINBOW ARTS £9.99cs, £14.99dk

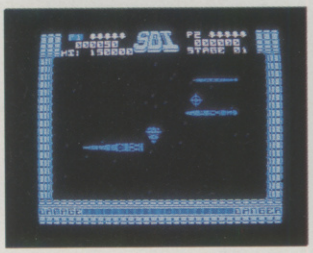
A weird and addictive game about a bouncing ball and an angled bat. The ball has to be guided through scrolling levels of obstacles to an exit gate. Bonuses can be picked up on the way, but there are also hazards that can kill both bat and ball. The bat can be flipped to present a flat or angled surface upwards. It can be moved freely around the screen to raise the ball up to objects, or squash it down. The levels get more complicated, demanding more skill with the bat. The gravity and speed of the ball can also be altered. Previous versions have been graphically impressive, which the Amstrad falls down on, but it has smooth horizontal scrolling. Fun for a time but palls fairly quickly.

■ **ACE RATING 662**

SDI

ACTIVISION £9.99cs, £14.99dk
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 15 – ACE rating 844

A straight port-over from the Spectrum, so very disappointing



for both graphics and sound. The gameplay holds up well, though, in both the offensive and defensive stages, making it raher fun to play, even if it does look lousy.

■ **ACE RATING 787**

THUNDERBLADE

US GOLD £9.99cs, £14.99dk
C64 version reviewed Issue 16 – ACE rating 800

You will be pleased to hear it's not a straight port-over from the Spectrum version – it's actually very colourful – but this has been achieved at the expense of speed. Like other versions, collision detection's iffy but not unplayably so. Tough and entertaining.

■ **ACE RATING 785**

ATARI ST

BARBARIAN II

PALACE £19.95
C64 version reviewed Issue 13 – ACE rating 754

Palace have done a fine job in converting their primaeval beat-em-up to the Atari, although it still suffers from the same frustrating

gameplay and annoying lack of moves. Graphics haven't improved a great deal over the original, but that's simply a testament to the quality of the C64 version. Great samples from the tatty soundchip.

■ ACE RATING 750

BISMARCK

PSS £24.99

The pride of the German navy (the Kriegsmarine) in 1941 was the monstrous Bismarck, which not only became fit for operation in May 1941, but also sank in the same month. Now is your chance to recreate or reshape history as you become commander of the British forces assigned to sink the ship, or the German commander desperately trying trying to flee into the Atlantic. It's a simple wargame with the famous PSS arcade sequences. Nicely presented but the game's very limited and won't be absorbing for long.

■ ACE RATING 540

GALDREGONS DOMAIN

PANDORA £19.95
Amiga version reviewed Issue 19 – ACE rating 704

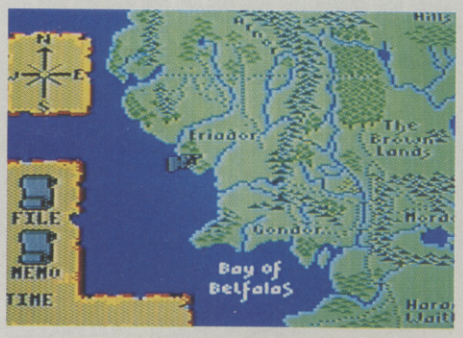
To all intents and purposes, identical to the Amiga in look, sound and feel. Only the need to swap between three disks during play sets this apart from its Commodore counterpart.

■ ACE RATING 704

WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH

UPDATE SPECIAL

MELBOURNE HOUSE £9.99cs £14.99dk
PC version reviewed Issue 17 – ACE rating 914



C64 – The main map screen which shows Middle Earth in its entirety. The finger icon is used to access the Campaign Level.

C64 – On the Campaign Level the cursor becomes a magnifying glass which is used to call up detail on units and places.

Frodo has the same aim in the 8-bit versions of *War in Middle Earth* as he does in the 16-bit game reviewed three issues ago, but the way the player gets involved is radically different.

For a start, there simply isn't room on cassette-based systems for the detailed 16-bit location graphics found at character level: indeed the character level is not present. The adventure element is also missing: there's no need to go in search of items to give to leaders of the races of Middle Earth before their forces are put under your command. All forces allied to the cause of good accept your orders the moment the game starts.

The main map screen gives an overview of Middle Earth, and action takes place while it is displayed. Moving a pointer over a location on the main map and pressing fire calls up the more detailed, scrolling Campaign Map. Here orders can be given to units, locations and armies can be examined in more detail and status information on your allies called up. While the Campaign Map is accessed, game time is paused. The strategic element of the 8-bit versions is true to life – you don't get to see the deployment of Sauron's forces on the Campaign Map, so the only way to find out where his armies are is by running into them.

The combat sequences are much more detailed. Rather than just selecting a couple of options from a menu, you can pitch in and join the fray. When two opposing armies meet, the display can be changed to give a view of the conflict and the player is allowed to influence the outcome of battle by using a cursor system to direct the actions of individual soldiers. Your troops don't go into attack on a battlefield, but wait patiently until they are either attacked or told who to fight.

As would be expected, there's not so much graphic detail in 8-bit versions of *War in Middle Earth*, but if anything there's more of a challenge, with the option to set levels of difficulty. Fans of the Mike Singleton approach to games design will recognise his touch.

SPECTRUM VERSION

Proved a little awkward to load at first, but apart from the Spectrum's graphical limitations, every bit as good as its 8-bit stablemates.

■ ACE RATING 851

C64 VERSION

Clanking sounds that accompany battles wear thin after a while.

■ ACE RATING 856

AMSTRAD VERSION

The game is marginally better suited to the Amstrad's capabilities.

■ ACE RATING 856

Amstrad – 8-bit versions of War in Middle Earth allow the player to really mix it during battles. Your troops don't attack opposing creatures – they just stand still, defending themselves if attacked. It's up to you to direct individual soldiers by selecting them with the cursor and giving them an objective to attack. The bad guys naturally ignore orders...

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SPHERE

ELECTRIC DREAMS £19.99dk
C64 version reviewed Issue 17 – ACE rating 923

Very similar to the Amiga version, which says a lot for the quality of the ST programming. Smooth scrolling, smashing graphics and the same wicked gameplay.

TEENAGE QUEEN

ERE INTERNATIONAL £19.95dk
Amiga version reviewed Issue 19 – ACE rating 408

Amazingly enough, some of the pictures differ from the Amiga version. She plays the same level of strong poker and you will finish the game and be bored with it just as quickly.

■ ACE RATING 408

C64

BAD DUDES VS DRAGONNINJA

IMAGINE £9.95cs, £14.95dk
Amstrad version reviewed Issue 18 – ACE rating 856

Unusual stop-go scrolling instead of the usual push-scroll of the other 8-bits, which proves less comfortable in use. Graphics are superb, especially the characters: beautifully-detailed multicolour sprites overlaid with hi-res. Probably the most difficult version so far, but providing an even greater challenge.

■ ACE RATING 860

MINI GOLF

MAGIC BYTES £9.99cs, £14.99dk
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 19 – ACE rating 613

The holes are ostensibly the same as on the ST, but some have been changed because of the reduction in graphic detail. This also means it's harder to judge the strength and path of the ball. Like the ST version it only really holds up as a multi-player game.

■ ACE RATING 604

SPACEBALL

RAINBOW ARTS £9.99cs, £14.99dk
Amiga version reviewed Issue 19 – ACE rating 505

It's harder than the Amiga version but with exactly the same screen layout and features. This means there is a bit more interest in play against the computer, but in the long term it's still only reasonable as a multi-player game.

■ ACE RATING 552

TECHNO COP

GREMLIN £9.99cs, £14.99dk
Spectrum version reviewed Issue 16 – ACE rating 804

The driving sequence is not that hot and the interior action is sluggish. Each section takes longer than on other machines, possibly to offset the long wait when loading from tape. An adequate conversion but not as exciting as some of the others.

■ ACE RATING 778

PC

CIRCUS GAMES

TYNESOFT £24.95
ST version reviewed Issue 19 – ACE rating 535

This version is almost identical to the ST original in gameplay – if a little faster – and only lacking in the visual department when run on the lower-end graphic systems. It also sports surprisingly good renditions of the circus themes, courtesy of the PC's minimalist internal beeper. However, the IBM version also inherits the limited variety and short-lived appeal of its Atari predecessor.

■ ACE RATING 540

REBEL CHARGE AT CHICKAMAUGA

SSI £29.99dk
Amiga version reviewed Issue 18 – ACE rating 841

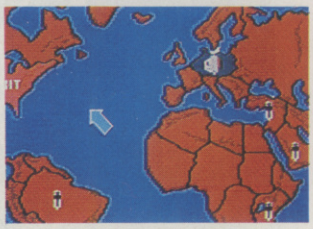
A great tactical wargame based in a famous battle of the American Civil War. A limited number of turns and precise objectives leave you in no doubt as to what you've got to do and how long you've got to do it in. Only the one scenario but three levels of play make it well worth a look if you're a novice or a veteran. One for the collection, especially if you like the SSI system or are particularly keen on the period.

■ ACE RATING 841

ROCKET RANGER

CINEMAWARE £19.99dk
Amiga version reviewed Issue 15 – ACE rating 814

Obviously they could not emulate



the graphics of the Amiga, but it's a pretty good attempt. All the action sequences are there and essentially the gameplay is the same. One annoying thing is that it was prone to crashes – very irritating in a long game which can't be saved.

■ ACE RATING 769

STRIKE FLEET

ELECTRONIC ARTS £24.95
C64 version reviewed Issue 8 – ACE rating 707

Lucasfilm's extensive naval warfare simulation finally appears on the IBM and has survived the transition more or less intact. The available scenarios have been increased to ten, with additional ships for authenticity. The minimal graphics are well suited to the PC format, and prove adequate on all standards. Its speed of use can be slightly frustrating in (frequent) times of crisis, though.

■ ACE RATING 735

ZANY GOLF

ELECTRONIC ARTS £24.95dk
Atari ST version reviewed Issue 19 – ACE rating 688

The holes are identical to the ST version and play the same as well. Unfortunately it won't run on CGA machines – but it does look good in EGA and VGA. It's still a little difficult calculating strength and direction, but that doesn't harm the gameplay much.

■ ACE RATING 688

SPECTRUM

BAD DUDES VS DRAGONNINJA

IMAGINE £8.95 cs, £14.95 dk
Amstrad version reviewed Issue 18 – ACE rating 856

The solo Bad Dude continues his efforts against DragonNinja on the monochrome stage of the Spectrum. The playability is all there, although the control method isn't as accessible as on the Amstrad and the screen tends to look cluttered at times. *DragonNinja* is multiloaded on the 48K, with just a single load on the 128.

■ ACE RATING 792

CIRCUS GAMES

TYNESOFT £8.95 cs £14.95 dk
ST version reviewed Issue 19 – ACE rating 535

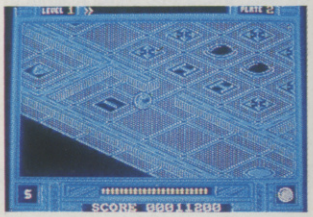
Other than monochrome graphics the only real difference between Spectrum *Circus Games* and the 16-bit versions is that the tiger training takes place over a single screen, with only three tricks to perform. However, limitations of the gameplay in general are compounded by the obligatory cassette multiload, and its appeal is even more short lived than that of its relatives.

■ ACE RATING 483

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SPHERE

ELECTRIC DREAMS £9.99cs, £14.99dk
C64 version reviewed Issue 17 – ACE rating 923

Does not suffer from the speed



problems of the Amstrad version and is consequently much more playable. The detailed, monocolour graphics work better here. Not quite the same feel as the C64 and 16-bit versions, but still plenty to get to grips with.

■ ACE RATING 863

WATCH OUT!

★

Next month we bring you yet more news of the latest releases of new versions for YOUR machine...

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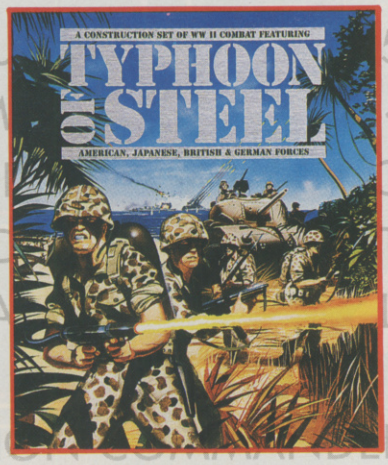

TYPHOON OF STEEL™ The ultimate simulation of Squad Level Combat in the Asian, Pacific and African Theatres of the Second World War. This highly detailed game allows you to refight individual battles, or an entire campaign.
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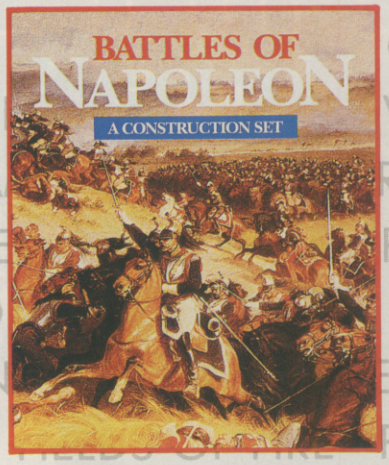

BATTLES OF NAPOLEON™ A superb advanced war game and a full blown construction set. Build your own maps with five terrain options, or let the computer generate a random scenario. Create the armies of your choice meeting the requirements of your exacting specifications. Or if you wish to get straight to the action, choose from the many pre-made scenarios such as Waterloo, Quatre Bras, Auerstaedt and Borodino.

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The game can be played at 1 of 3 levels of difficulty and is a must for players of the 'Gettysburg' system.

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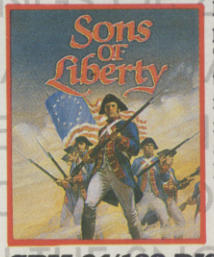

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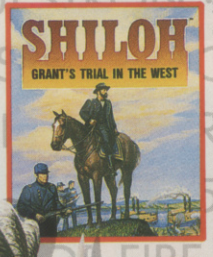

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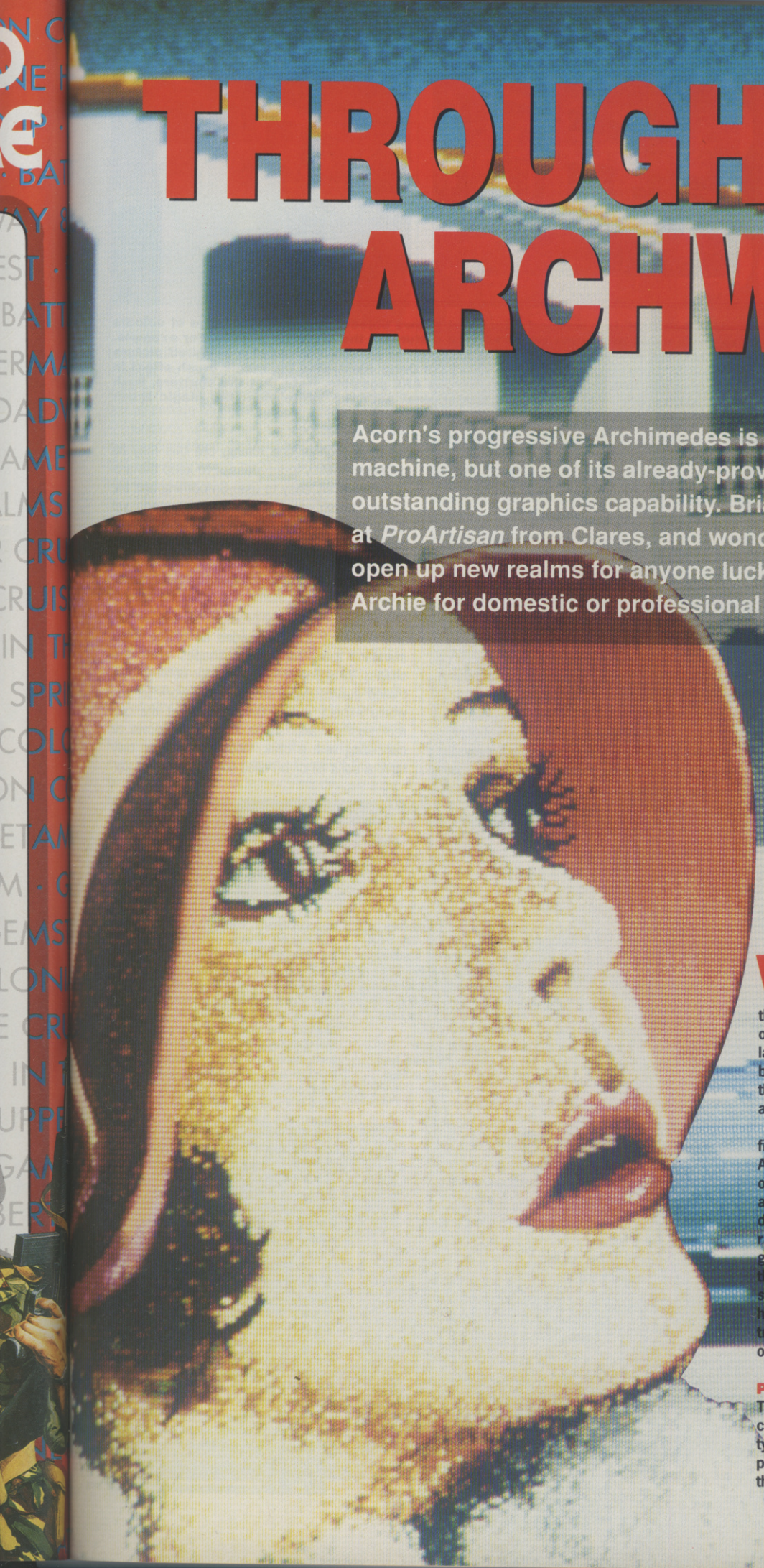
THROUGH THE ARCHWAY...

Acorn's progressive Archimedes is a much-ignored machine, but one of its already-proven strengths is an outstanding graphics capability. Brian Larkman takes a look at *ProArtisan* from Clares, and wonders if this package can open up new realms for anyone lucky enough to have an Archie for domestic or professional use...



When a new machine as revolutionary as the Archimedes is released, you can be sure that the first flood of software for it will show off all the easy tricks. The more spectacular (but more difficult) things take time, because the programmers are learning the innermost secrets of the machine only a few steps ahead of us less brainy folk.

Artisan from Clares was one of the first 'third party' software products for the Arc. *ProArtisan*, produced with the benefit of experience, shows many improvements and yet retains many quirks. Despite doubts about the user interface, it offers a range of painting tools which, with a few glaring exceptions, work faster than anything we have seen on a micro. *ProArtisan* can be a right pain to use, but you have to love it – it has some wonderful tricks and, best of all, it puts 256 colours on screen at once.

PROMPT: BY THE BOOK

The manual is rather good. It provides clear instructions for every function, plenty of practice exercises, colour examples produced by a professional designer using the *Pro-Artisan* package (some of the best

looking computer paintwork ever from a micro), and even an index. You will need to read at least some of the instructions, especially if you are unfamiliar with the rather clumsy three-button Acorn mouse. This is not a package that you can just launch into, but let's have a go.

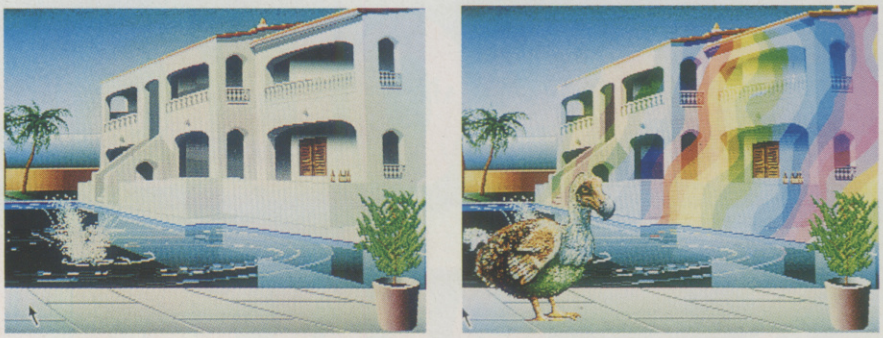
PROCEED: INTO THE INTERFACE

The first thing to greet you after the traditional Beeb ritual of the Shift/Break 'boot' is a blank working screen with contrasting border and a small, rather pretty and colourful window, which is the Main Menu. The eight icons displayed in this window give access to all of the features of the program, or exit to Desktop.

Before selecting anything else, clicking the Help icon opens a 'prompting' window across the bottom of the screen displaying the function of any tool pointed to with the arrow cursor. This is extremely useful in the early stages, while learning the program.

PROBLEM: THE MENUS

Selecting an icon from the main menu brings up a secondary menu offering a range of available functions, for most of which there is a tertiary menu of options or parameters. The problem is that every time a new function is required the menu structure has to be backtracked through and then penetrated again. To make matters worse, the menus always disappear when you move off them and require two mouse-clicks to bring them back: one brings up the palette, a second the current menu. Then a third click is required to select the new function and a fourth to set the new required parameter. Far too many clicks for fast, fluid drawing action! Even when the process is mastered, a drawing session can sound like a beginners' tap-dancing class.



'MAGIC BRUSH' is a wonderful tool that allows objects drawn in one range of colours to be changed to another range without disturbing the dithering effects. For example, a black and white picture could be coloured or selected areas of a coloured picture turned to monochrome. 'Rainbow Villa With Dodo' illustrates the magic brush effect in rather gaudy fashion. More subtle changes ARE possible. Note that the shutters, bush and bottles are unchanged from the original with the white villa: the magic brush painted directly over them.

PRODUCTION: THE TOOLS

The majority of the 'production' tools – those used most frequently – are accessed with the Draw icon of the Main Menu. Tools such as freehand draw in any shape or size, flood and dithered fills, airbrush, 'magic brush', smoothing, patterns, 'exclude' or key colour and zoom are all gathered on this menu.

Once you overcome the menu problems, the tools provided are good, if rather lacking in customising options. The dithered fills, for instance, look exceptionally good, but the degree of dither cannot be varied, only the position of the highlight. Most of the tools have a similar lack of fine tuning, but this may be deliberate policy in an attempt to keep the program relatively easy to use. Smoothing and the 'magic brush' are simply implemented, yet quite powerful. Nevertheless, most professional users will require a great deal more control over some of the tools if they are to overcome the constraints of style imposed by the system.

PROFILE: CONTROLLING SHAPES

The 'Banding' Menu provides all of the usual standard tools for outline shapes and filled shapes, plus Bezier: a method for defining controlled curves. Most of the tools work as you would expect; rubber-banding to get the correct position and shape then fixing down or cancelling with a click. Filled shapes can only have a solid fill or be filled with the current pat-

OBJECT-ORIENTED BEZIER CURVES

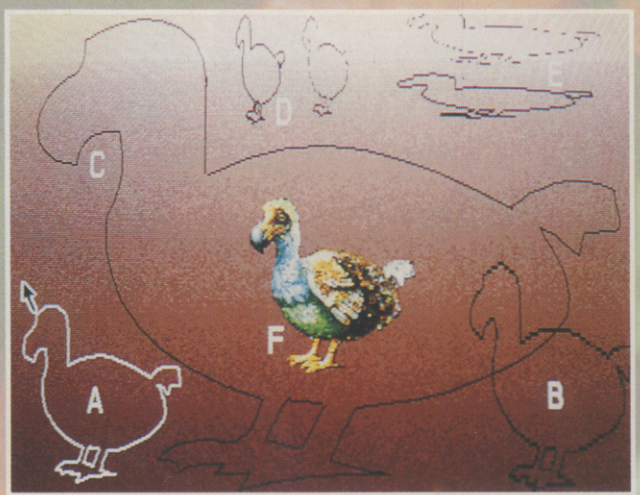
In *ProArtisan*, a Bezier curve is effectively a user-defined outline shape that can be dragged out and positioned on the screen in much the same way that a circle or rectangle might be in other systems.

A particular Bezier curve is defined on a separate screen, which can have an enlarged version of any 'sprite' (defined as a brush) positioned on it to trace around. Up to 128 separate curves can be used to trace an object, each of which has four points: two end points and two 'control' points. The relative position of the control points defines the complexity of the curve. The resulting outline can be saved to disk as a block of 'object-oriented' or vector data for later use: in this form it can always be modified by loading it to the Bezier screen and then moving the control points, which are saved with the curve.

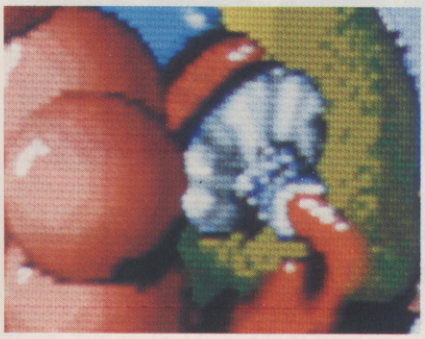
Once the outline has been pasted to the screen it becomes part of the bit map and can only be changed with the normal screen tools.

The drawing below illustrates the difference between a Bezier curve, enlarged and reduced, and a normal bit-mapped curve, enlarged and reduced. 'A' shows the original Bezier taken from the sprite Dodo (F) at normal size. 'B' is a normal brush copied from 'A' and enlarged slightly. This enlargement also expands each individual pixel. By contrast, 'C' is the same Bezier as 'A' enlarged greatly. 'D' and 'E' are similar distortions using Bezier and brush methods. The differences in line widths are obvious.

In some ways, this method of using curves has great advantages over the usual direct 'over-the-picture' approach. Each outline can be fine-tuned and saved to disk as part of a library of shapes. It is a pity that all the banded shapes were not included in this system so that more complex illustrations could be constructed and then scaled up and down in size and shape without the limitations of pixellation. In fact it is really only one step from this system to that employed by *Super Paint* for the Apple Macintosh which uses two superimposed screens, one for normal bit-mapped paint images and one for CAD-like object-oriented drawings that can be merged onto the paint screen.



Beyond that, the ultimate drawing system would provide a wide range of special vector tools similar to those provided by *Adobe Illustrator 88* or *Aldus Freehand*, (both also for the Mac), as well as paint tools. This could well be the upgrade path for *ProArtisan*. In future months you will be hearing more of this sort of program: vector-oriented but not CAD.



tern, so dithering has to be added later. Bezier, however, is set up on a separate screen and used in a rather unusual way, as described in a box elsewhere on these pages.

Gridlock is also set up and activated via the Banding Menu. There is no coordinate system provided, which might be a nuisance if you require accuracy.

PROGNOSIS: THE CONCLUSIONS

Two basic additions to the system would make *ProArtisan* much easier to use; tear-off menus and keyboard equivalents. The idea of menus that appear when and where you want them is very good, but the option to keep them on screen should at least be available if required. The palette, for instance, could have a 'most-recently-used' option displaying the last eight or sixteen colours selected. Passing through the whole 256 colour palette every time you call up a menu can be very tedious. Keyboard equivalents – or even better, user-defined macros – would also speed up use of the system greatly, and provide much-needed exercise for your other hand!

Aside from the laborious menu system, *ProArtisan* is a nice program to use, especially after a bit of practice. This is mostly thanks to the joy of having 256 colours on-screen. Many of the facilities are either completely new or implemented in a new and unique way that encourages experimentation. Sprite handling, area distortion, edge detection and global 'magic brush' are particularly interesting and potentially useful. In spite of all this, the program is rather lacking when it comes to controlling the features, as compared, for instance, to *Deluxe Paint*. It gives you the feeling that after quite a short while, all the pictures you produce would feel much the same. In the end, the big problem is the interface. ■

PIXEL POST

Spiros Blaxos,
CORFU.

Dear Mr Larkman,
ACE doesn't come frequently in Corfu. Accidentally I obtained an issue (14, November) , where I found your article about *PhotoLab*. I am 37 years old, a teacher of physics and a painter as well. Recently I bought an Amiga 500 with which I now paint.

The only problem (apart from the memory expansion) is the ways of reproduction. Several solutions exist but every one of them has its misgivings:

1. Polaroid Palette.
It has a high price and there is not an interface for the A500 (as far as local Commodore knows) ...

2. Xerox 4020 (inkjet printer).
It also has a high price. A real disadvantage was its small paper size (A4), solved as you say by *Deluxe PhotoLab*, and the durability of the colours.

3. Photograph of monitor.
I have attempted it but the results were rather miserable because the lines of the monitor were showing (the lines of the glass I mean).

The questions are:

Is Xerox 4020 the best of the available methods for reproducing computer images with the Amiga 500?

Is there another one (at least a cheaper one)?

What about Polaroid's Palette?

Dear Spiros,
As always, reproduction of screen images is a real problem. Photography can give the best results but a lot of care is necessary. Interlace pictures come out best – with more horizontal lines (512 instead of 256) the display looks much smoother, but this mode is annoying to use because of the flicker. You can get round this problem in several ways. Whatever mode you use to draw a picture, it can be converted to interlace without loss of definition by one of several programs – *Pixmate*, *Butcher*, *Deluxe PhotoLab* – so draw in low-res and convert to interlace for the screenshot.

A more expensive alternative is Flicker Fixer, a hardware add-on that is only available for the Amiga 2000 at the moment. A 500 version may be released but it is not available yet as far as I know. To add to the expense you need a Multi-Synch Monitor to use Flicker Fixer. Despite the cost the results are amazing; horizontal scan-lines disappear in all modes, not just interlace, making clean screenshots very easy. I wish I could afford it myself. It is still cheaper than either the Xerox 4020 or the Polaroid Palette though!

Polaroid Palette uses a similar method – high quality flat display monitor inside a lightproof casing – but with elaborate control of light and colour to give perfectly balanced pictures. The monitor cannot be used for anything other than taking pictures though. In effect you can get almost as good results using Flicker Fixer with the added benefit of a high quality display that can be used all the time.

The Xerox 4020 is a very good printer, but like all medium-priced colour printers the images it produces are not particularly accurate in terms of colour. It is the best of the bunch at the moment, though. There are several cheaper printers – Star LC10-C, Okimate and the like – but the printouts are either small or of poor quality. Integrex produce several ink-jet printers based on Canon mechanicals but they may be difficult or impossible to get in Greece. Their latest 'ColourCel' printer is very good – better than the Xerox – but costs £2-3,000. Even more expensive (£6-10,000) are the various wax transfer printers – Mitsubishi, Tektronix et al – but these give almost colour supplement quality at up to A3 size.

To sum up, I think your choice is limited: Xerox 4020 or Polaroid Palette/Imprint. Personally I think that the money spent on a Polaroid would be better used for Flicker Fixer, a MultiSynch monitor and a good camera and tripod, but I am open to convincing by Polaroid if they want to lend me a Palette/Imprint setup for comparison!!

More information could be obtained about most of these products from the Amiga Centre Scotland.

ADVENTURES

In anticipation of next month's truly awesome Adventures Special, Steve Cooke pauses for breath. In the meantime, he offers news of the latest in fantasy/role-playing releases, a fabulous competition, and the eagerly-awaited ACE Adventure Conference...

IT'S A MYTH!

Great prizes for adventurers up for grabs in our exclusive Official Secrets competition!

OK chaps and chappesses, here's the nitty-gritty...
YOU fill in the form below, answer the questions, and pop it in the post before May 5 1989.
WE pick the first sixteen winners and, in conjunction with the Official Secrets adventure mail-order club, splash out on the following prizes for you lucky so-and-sos:

FIRST PRIZE: The winner gets two tickets entitling him/her to be Guest of Honour at a Mediaeval Weekend in October of this year. You get two nights accommodation, lunches, dinners, feasts, games, dances, tournaments, and whole host of other suitably mediaeval activities at Briavels Castle in Gloucestershire.

PLUS you get a year's FREE membership of Official Secrets, entitling you to two free games (including Magnetic Scrolls' *Myth*, exclusively programmed for Official Secrets) and bags of other special offers.

SECOND PRIZES: Five lucky entrants receive FREE Official Secrets membership, two free games, a 32 page bi-monthly magazine, and much more.

THIRD PRIZES: Ten runners-up receive free membership of Special Reserve, bringing you a free bi-monthly Player's Guide and dozens of special mail-order offers throughout the year.

SPECIAL BONUS: All winners of First and Second prizes will receive a copy of Prism's *Krystal*; Third Prize winners will get a free copy of Infogrames' *Temple of the Flying Saucers*.

Not bad going for a 19p stamp, eh? Now here's the form and the questions:

WHO OR WHAT IS OFFICIAL SECRETS ?

Official Secrets is a mail-order software club started by Tony Rainbird – the man who began Telecomsoft's Rainbird label, since responsible for bringing out games like Magnetic Scrolls' *Jinxter* and Level 9's *Jewels of Darkness*.

The club normally costs £19.95 for a year's membership (£24.95 in the EEC) and brings you a free bi-monthly magazine, Confidential, two free games on joining, a helpline, competitions, and a host of other club activities.

What's more, Official Secrets members get free membership of another mail-order club, Special Reserve, which caters especially for arcade fans and gives a 24-hour discount delivery service.

You can contact Official Secrets for more details at:
2 South Block, The Maltings, Riverside Way, Sawbridgeworth, HERTS CM21 9PG

1. Official Secrets members get a free copy of *Myth* by Magnetic Scrolls. Name two other Magnetic Scrolls games.

2. Which software house released *Ingrid's Back* in 1988?

3. Which of these is the odd man out?
Bilbo, Merry, Pippin, Gandalf, Lancelot.

YOUR NAME.....

YOUR ADDRESS.....

.....

.....

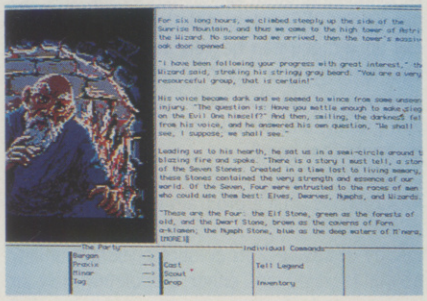
.....YOUR AGE.....

YOUR COMPUTER.....

NEW INFOCOM TITLES ARRIVE...

Just as we go to press, copies of Infocom's long awaited *Shogun* and *Journey* drop onto our desks. We'll be bringing you a full review of both titles next month.

Shogun is a game we'll all have to watch. It

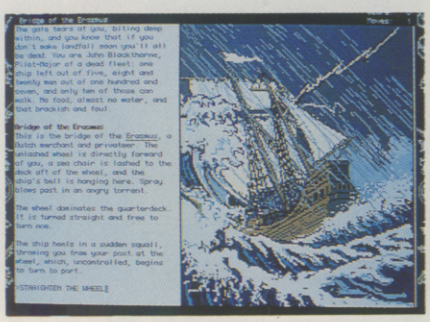


(Above) Infocom's *Journey*: RPG-meets-text-adventure. (Below) *Shogun*: graphics apart, is this the last Infocom traditional adventure?

is currently the only new title in the Infocom range that adheres faithfully to the old adventure recipe without any role-playing or arcade thrills (as there are in *Journey* and *Battletech*). The only concession to 1989 is the addition of graphics, albeit very impressive ones. Whether this will be sufficient for today's market remains to be seen.

If *Shogun* fails, we may be looking back on it as the last pure Infocom adventure. Tempus fugit, eh chaps?

Journey, on the other hand, is almost as important, but for another reason. This product is the company's main stab at the RPG-type ➤



market, in which most other companies are currently netting mega-bucks. If *Journey* makes the grade, then Infocom can heave a sigh of relief. If it doesn't, well...

Infocom spotting is a worthwhile pastime because it gives us some idea of the state of the fantasy market in the US. Right now, the signs are not encouraging. The company released several new games (*Nord'n'Bert, Plundered Hearts* etc.) in 1987 and have published almost nothing since. Now owned by Mediagenic, they are not having an easy time, while companies like Origin (*Ultima*) and EA (*Bards Tale*) continue to reap large rewards.

Maybe the old text adventures should just lie down and die...See the Adventure Conference section for other points of view...

LEVEL 9 ENTER ROLE PLAYING ARENA

Level 9 have almost finished the development of their own 'animated adventure system' which will enable them to produce a fully-fledged fantasy RPG by the end of this summer.

The first game is already under development, making Level 9 the first major UK software house to produce an RPG in recent years. "We've already done a lot of the graphics," says Pete Austin, "and we hope to launch at the end of the summer. The game will be for the 16-bit machines only."

Meanwhile, Level 9 have are about to launch their latest graphics adventure, *Scapeghost*. The player takes the part of a ghost believed responsible for committing a series of crimes. You must locate the villains and free their hostage.

"The puzzles in the game are all to do with your being a ghost," Pete reveals. So surely you can't die? "Not exactly," hints the Level 9 maestro, "but you'll fade away in a strong light – and in part 3 you can be exorcised if you're not careful."

Scapeghost's graphics are reputedly even better than those in *Ingrid's Back*. Watch this space for a review in the very near future.

NEXT MONTH

Next month's section is an adventure in itself. Not only will you get exhaustive reviews of the latest Infocom products, but also a complete guide to Role Playing Games currently available in this country. These games cost money – make sure you get the right one by checking out the unique RPG-uide in next month's ACE...

ACE ADVENTURE CONFERENCE

As the release of Infocom's *Shogun* draws nearer, we're all holding our breath wondering what's going to happen to the traditional text adventure. Pete Austin of Level 9, Ty Newton from Australia, Craig Ryder of Bargoed, and Ian Urquhart of London have all got something to say about it.

What about you? This month's topic is 'The Future of Text Adventuring', but you can always open a topic of your own. Your opinions will be printed here on the page, together with those of others in the adventure industry. There are prizes too – Ian Urquhart gets this month's prize for the best letter. Next month it could be you!

From: Ian Urquhart, London
Topic: Future of text-only games.

Text adventures have come a long way since the early days of few locations and puzzles so cryptic that they frequently defied solution...

In those heady days of yore, I was battling through the darkness on my CBM64. I've got nothing against the adventures of those days, but now – after the tentacles of slime dripping from the ceiling in *Lurking Horror*, or the marvellously crafted Floyd in *Station/Planetfall*, I vow never to pick up a cheapo adventure again!

As for graphics, where else could a picture NOT be worth more than a thousand words? Just as I got bored with the likes of *The Hobbit* and *The Hulk* (remembered with fondness, even if there were THREE domes!) along came *The Pawn* on the ST. Here the graphics and the adventure were so well constructed that I felt Infocom would turn over and shudder – which they seem to have done! On the larger machines, there can no longer be any conflict between text, puzzles, and graphics.

Graphics are going to oust the text-only games from the market. I don't necessarily think that's a good thing – I don't think *Lurking Horror* would be quite the same if you could actually SEE the Horror, and Floyd will always be sacred to my imagination.

From: Craig Rider, Bargoed
Topic: Text adventures

Instead of the player picturing the character, world, and other creatures he meets in a game in his mind's eye, it's now all thrust onto the screen in front of him.

This is a shame as no two people have the same imagination, so with the text-only games, the adventure was different for everyone who played it. Not any more...

The trial and error these days does not involve playing the game, but finding one that taxes the intelligence and imagination.

From: Ty Newton, Australia
Topic: The Future of Adventures

32-bit systems will create a new adventurer faced with the true competition of the mult-user game. Houses like Magnetic Scrolls and Level 9 will sell dedicated modems with their programs.

Finally, CD-ROM will enable software houses to create game environments only, into which the players can port their own characters and create adventures of their own...just like real life.

From: Pete Austin, Level 9
Topic: Text Adventures

Text adventures are going to keep on selling, but the real growth area is fantasy role-playing rather than 'pure' adventures. Our own animated adventure system is almost finished and I've been looking at the other RPG's currently available. I prefer to have a single character myself rather than a party. It just seems too obvious a choice as to which character you should use in which way.

(Pete has also pointed out, on another occasion, that one problem with traditional text adventures is the puzzle element. There are a limited number of effective text-only puzzle possibilities. You can expand these using interactive characters, but role-playing and attributes seem to offer more scope).

JOIN THE CONFERENCE!

Express your own opinions, argue with the experts, and even win a prize! Every month we'll send a mystery software adventure prize to the writer of the best letter. Write with YOUR views now to:

ACE Adventure Conference
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TR19 6JS

Don't forget to include your name, address, and details of your computer. There's no need to write a book – just a few words will do. In fact longer letters will almost certainly be edited for length. Be punchy!

ACE WARGAMES SPECIAL

Board wargaming has made the transition to computer screens fairly smoothly, and there's a wealth of military simulation software available. Andy Smith dons his general's uniform to check out the latest batch of wargames, while Zog contemplates the prospects of the pixel battlefield...

WARGAMES of the future will probably incorporate the lessons learned by such games as the *Wargame Construction Set, Universal Military Simulator, Borodino* and *The Ancient Art of War*. Players seem to want realism in terms of how the landscape and units are modelled, but also like to get involved in the actual fighting in some way. My own personal favourite was always *Art of War* for this, since its simple use of the scissors/paper/rock idea for troop types was readily grasped and still left lots of room for the player to make a total mess of everything.

Until very recently, some elements of conflict were simulated quite well in computer wargames whilst others were hardly addressed at all. For me, the fact that the full gory technicolour details of hand-to-hand fighting are missing is not the problem. The main design shortcoming has been the way in which the games tend to be modelled as if the conflict was a personal fight. In other words, the results of individual battles can almost always be examined the instant they are resolved. In some games, you can even view the results during the individual phases of a move, and alter your strategy on the spot to suit. This technique is ideal for modelling a one-on-one fight up some dark alley, but isn't a faithful representation of what happens when you are in a real-life war or battle.

Borodino (reviewed in ACE Issue 19) comes much closer to addressing the problems of realistically simulating events on a battlefield by presenting you with a similar set of problems to those faced by a commander in the field - your orders have to be sent to units by messengers. The further away the units are, the longer the orders take to get there and the greater the risk that they will never arrive at all. A sniper may pick the runner off and your message may never get through, or the orders that are finally

WAGING

received may be ambiguous in the light of changing events... Wargames, after all, are simulators for commanders, not of events.

FROM TABLETOP TO LAPTOP

Tabletop games spawned board wargaming and gave rise to computer wargames, and in many respects the computer has the potential edge in terms of both realism and ease and convenience of play. To try to achieve realism in a tabletop game, huge terrain maps are needed with hundreds, if not thousands, of lead figures on them. Moves and combat are achieved by applying rulers and bits of string to the task in hand after consulting massive tomes of rules and tables. The only other approach was to throw the realism away and just get down to the nitty gritty in ritualised combat in games such as chess, where the rules are easy to learn and neither player starts with a material advantage.

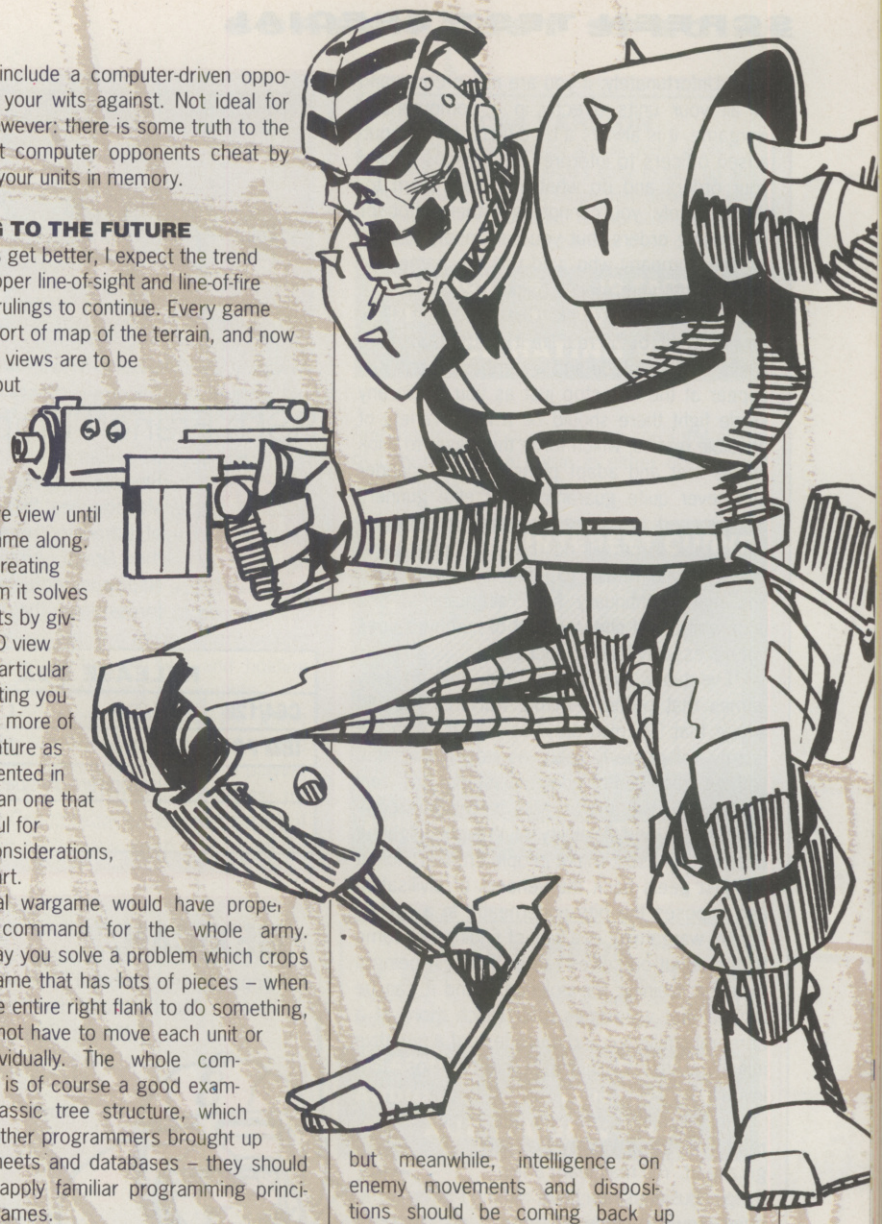
Theoretically, a tabletop game taking up the entire East Wing of your stately home can now be accurately modelled with a few square inches of silicon chips and a disk file or two. This is, of course, fortunate for those of us who do not have a spare acre or so indoors, and only get to play our wargames when the ironing board is put away. Even if you do have the room for a traditional tabletop game, the computer can take much of the pain out of applying complicated sets of rules - a package such as *Eaglebearer* from Battle Honours (0746 32627) can be used in conjunction with lead figures and landscape models to run battles. *Eaglebearer* takes care of morale and casualty calculations, and introduces variables such as weather and the deaths of commanders as well as dispensing with written rules.

Secrecy is of major importance when fighting a real battle, but is difficult to achieve on the top of a table when all is on view. The more you can conceal your 'shape', as Sun Tzu, the oriental strategist, would say, the more you are in command of the situation. Computers allow some measure of secrecy – for instance, units can be placed at the start of a game but only revealed when they are spotted by soldiers from the other side. Of course, with two players using the same screen it is rather difficult to maintain your sneaky flank attack. Nowadays though, more and more people have got their own computer. By using the ports out of the back to connect two or more computers together, it is possible to get round this problem and going one step further, by using phone lines and modems, the players do not even have to be in the same room.

And of course, with the computer you don't need a friend to play with – virtually all wargames include a computer-driven opponent to pit your wits against. Not ideal for secrecy, however: there is some truth to the rumour that computer opponents cheat by peeking at your units in memory.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As graphics get better, I expect the trend towards proper line-of-sight and line-of-fire (LOS/LOF) rulings to continue. Every game has some sort of map of the terrain, and now perspective views are to be found too, but nobody seemed to bother offering the 'soldier's eye view' until *Borodino* came along. As well as creating more realism it solves all arguments by giving you a 3D view from your particular unit, and letting you look. This is more of a 'cheat' feature as it is implemented in *Borodino* than one that is truly useful for LOS/LOF considerations, but it's a start.



My ideal wargame would have proper chains of command for the whole army. Straight away you solve a problem which crops up in any game that has lots of pieces – when you want the entire right flank to do something, you should not have to move each unit or soldier individually. The whole command setup is of course a good example of a classic tree structure, which shouldn't bother programmers brought up on spreadsheets and databases – they should be able to apply familiar programming principles to wargames.

At the top of the tree sits the Commander-In-Chief. His orders are broad and sweeping, for example: "Advance into Poland." These orders are passed down the command tree, becoming more precise and refined in the process. A brigadier may order a reconnaissance unit to check out the woods just outside a town: finally, the sergeant and his squad of men are told to "Move into the farmhouse just east of you."

Individual small units at the bottom of the tree are primarily the limbs of the army, but also provide much of an army's senses. Orders are interpreted, refined and the rough outlines filled in as the commands move down the tree, but meanwhile, intelligence on enemy movements and dispositions should be coming back up towards the General Staff. Intelligence involves gathering and assembling small pieces of information, and building them up into an overall picture that is useful for formulating strategies or modifying tactics. An ideal computer wargame should include a system for combining snippets of information gathered on the field into a picture that the player can utilise.

In the ultimate computer wargame of the future, all the handling of commands, orders and intelligence-gathering needed to simulate reality will probably have to be achieved with with some form of battle-language – computers are still not quite good enough to work with true English. Of course, any improvement to a system can have its dangers: if you were commanding something like a humble tank squadron and failed to obey orders, the possibility of a Court Martial and demotion to 'Assistant Shoveller, 7th Class' in the local slate mines might well be on the cards in a more sophisticated wargame system...

Within a realistic model of the command tree which allows two-way communication of information, timing becomes much more important, something that chess players have known for centuries. Any sensible commander is aware that just slogging it out is probably the least sensible thing to do during a battle. As in Judo, a small force, if applied at the correct moment, can readily throw a much larger oppo-

WAR

nent. Unfortunately, if you are not in command of all your units directly in a computerised wargame, it is always a bit difficult for computerised officers to interpret the reasons behind your orders and do what you want them to. Unfortunately, you cannot have them shot for disobeying orders, but you can resort to ringing the company who sold you the game and trying to get your money back!

Finally there is luck. Chess doesn't allow for any at all, but in real life it exists. Guns jam, shells fail to explode and a number 14 bus can appear at the bus stop just as you do. In any single fight there should be a large variety of possible results, which force the player to think on his feet and adapt plans – a commander can never quite guarantee that elite gunners will succeed in halting an attack or that his entire tank force will not be held up by paratroopers who refuse to let it cross a bridge. You must continually have alternatives, and understand that sheer weight of numbers does not necessarily lead to success.

Eventually, we should be able to play games that properly mimic warfare. The old adage that 'No plan survives contact with the enemy' will properly apply, as indeed it should. Without the death and devastation of real fighting, we will still be able to practice competitiveness and flexibility of thought. Fighting does not, in itself, make people cruel or violent – it just peels back the veneers of civilisation and exposes the bits underneath. In a certain sense, wargaming is a way of finding out some things about ourselves rather than just being a mindless training for violence – and it can be argued that wargames offer much more of a cerebral challenge and much less of a negative influence than mindless shoot-em-ups that involve war scenarios.

Incidentally, if you ever get a chance to read 'The Art of War' by Sun Tzu, go ahead. You may learn a few things. Businessmen have been known to study his writings just to try to develop that competitive edge over their rivals. And anyway, any book that was written somewhere around 400 BC and is still a standard reference work in military colleges around the world today must have something going for it. Wargames of the future will still make use of the principles involved, so if you are a wargamer, it's a vital work of reference.

The Art Of War
- **Sun Tzu**
- **Translation by S.B. Griffith**
- **Oxford University Press**
- **ISBN 0-19-501476-6**

BATTLES OF NAPOLEON

SSI's French Emperor simulator

Seventy miles west of Moscow lies the small town of Borodino. Here, in 1812, the Grand Armée led by Napoleon defeated Russian forces under the command of Prince Kutusov, but paid heavily for the honour – indeed, by the end of 1812 the Grand Armée ceased to exist as a fighting force.

RELEASE BOX		
C64/128	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£29.99dk	Mid-May
Other versions are possible		

The battle for Borodino is one of four scenarios included in this one or two player wargame from SSI: the other three included are Auerstadt, Quatre Bras and Waterloo. There's also a scenario-designer option that allows you create your own scenarios or get the computer to generate random 'hypothetical' battles.

The game is divided into two main sections, orders and combat, each section made up of several phases. During the orders phase the first things to do are assign objectives and leaders to your troops (leaders play

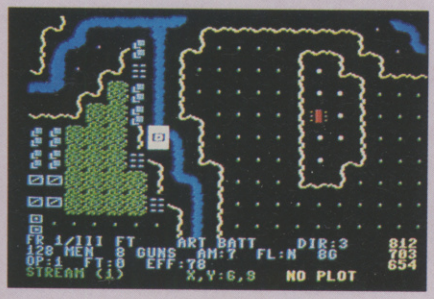
MEXICAN, Vietnamese, Japanese, German and Korean troops (amongst others) have all suffered at the hands of the United States Marine Corps since they were first created in 1775. This one or two player wargame from the Australian Strategic Studies Group is a battle history of the USMC from 1847 to 1968.

There are eight historic confrontations to play, starting with Mexico City and ending at Hue. Each game lasts a set number of turns, with four turns per day (morning, noon, afternoon and night). Once you've decided which side to play it's time to issue orders.

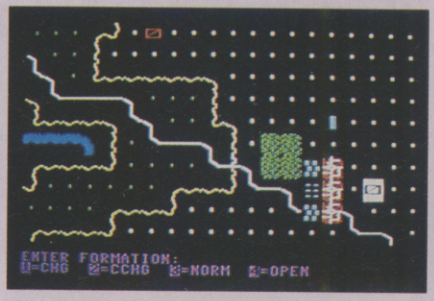
Your forces are split into Divisions, and each player can have up to three Divisions depending on the scenario. The Divisions are sub-divided into Regiments which are sub-divided into Battalions. The smallest units you can give orders to are Regiments. The state of a Regiment, i.e. whether it's engaged or in contact or miles away from an enemy unit, influences the kind of orders you can give.

Imagine you have three Regiments in one Division. Regiment One is engaged with the enemy, so you issue it an order to attack the enemy with an ASSAULT order. Regiment Two is in contact with another enemy unit so you order it to PROBE the enemy lines. Regiment Three is behind your own lines and you want it to move further toward the front line. Issue it an OBJECTIVE

The USMC prepare to storm Iwo Jima. Assign objectives and prepare for battle.



The Borodino scenario – Eugene prepares to assault The Great Redoubt.



The Austerstadt scenario – changing the formation of a unit is simplicity itself.

C64 VERSION

The graphics and sound are as you'd expect. It plays a little slowly, but it's easy to pick up and the scenarios included range from small and simple to big and complex. The variations available ensure you'll be coming back for many months.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	1	FUN FACTOR	7

ACE RATING 923

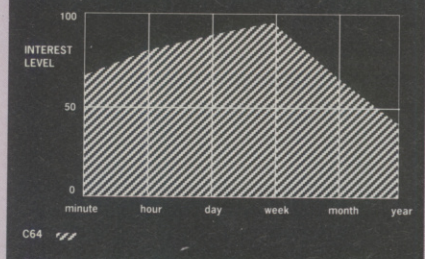
an important part in a unit's efficiency). Once you've done that you enter the operations phase, where you move your units, alter their facing direction and select targets (taking into account Line Of Sight firing) for them to attack during the next phase. If you can't actually target an enemy unit because there isn't one in your LOS, but you suspect one may be visible in the next turn, you can target the empty square and any enemy unit entering the square will automatically be targeted.

Once you've moved all your units and are satisfied with things, hit the key and enter the combat phase. Here all combat is resolved including artillery and melée fire, for both sides. Then the computer (or your human opponent) makes its moves and you start again at the leader assignment phase.

Each battle lasts a set number of turns (each turn equalling half-an-hour of real time) with full battle reports at the end of each turn giving you an up-to-the-minute account of how the battle is going. At the end of play the winner is the person with the most victory points, which are awarded for reaching and holding objectives and for destroying enemy units.

BON is a complex game, but the game system is easy to work with. It's a great plus to be able to force the computer (if you're playing solo) to employ certain overall strategies: try selecting the Counterattack-Automatic setting if you're getting particularly good at a scenario! And the designer option means you'll get plenty of play out of the game in either one or two player mode. Great stuff.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A tidy system eases you into months of play.

HALLS OF MONTEZUMA

SSG join the United States Marine Corps

RELEASE BOX		
C64/128	£18.95dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.95dk	OUT NOW

order and you can cycle through a list of predetermined objectives and order it to ADVANCE on the one you think proper.

Once all your units have their orders and you've assigned any independent Battalions to any regiment that requires it (an artillery Battalion assigned to Regiment One in the example may be a good idea) it's time to think about allocating air support to the regiments that need it (obviously, the weather plays a major part here). Then hit the key and watch the results of the movement and combat.

Winning any scenario is decided by victory points which are awarded for reaching and holding objectives and destroying enemy units. To familiarise yourself with not only the system, but with each scenario, it's a good idea to edit things slightly in your favour. For a start, you can select either an enhanced (where random but powerful benefits are given to the computer player) or a normal game, and whether either side should have any sort of advantage.

The nature of the battle varies with the scenario, as does the scale of the map: for example, the Pusan scenario is fought over a much larger area than the Hue scenario, which of course affects your strategy and tactics for each scenario (as too does the composition and disposition of the enemy forces).

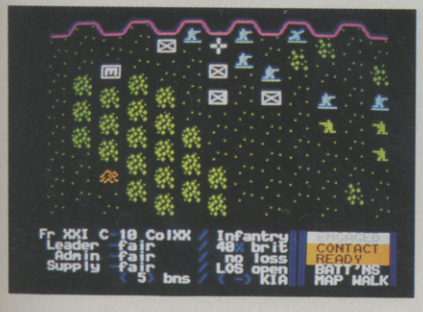
Halls of Montezuma plays a tough game, especially if you limit-set for yourself and give the computer a few unhistoric advantages (as suggested in the manual accompanying the game). The ordering system is easy to use and with the built-in designer option, that allows you to alter existing or create new scenarios, you're going to be playing this for some time.

PC VERSION

The graphics are basic, especially for EGA machines, but that's nothing new and doesn't detract from the game, which plays well.

GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	1	FUN FACTOR	7

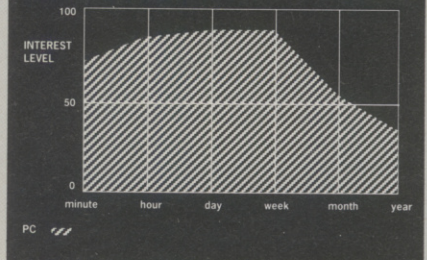
ACE RATING 884



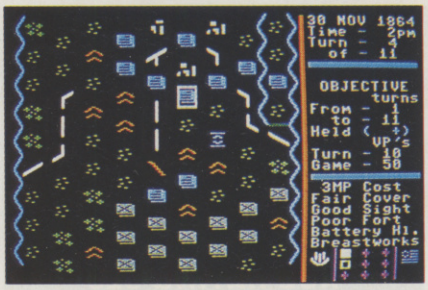
In Belleau Wood. You're commanding allied troops as well as Americans here.

The Hue scenario. Different tactics are called for in this street-fight.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Eeasy to play with plenty to keep you busy.



Assigning objectives to your units in the Franklin scenario. It was here the Confederates surprised the Union forces waiting to repair a bridge.

DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR VOLUME III

SSG's final chapter

916 ACE RATED

This is the third and final chapter in the series of SSG games covering the most important battles from what's widely regarded as the first 'modern' war.

Vol III includes six of the lesser-known battles, including Atlanta and Spotsylvania. The others are Wilderness Tavern, Cold Harbour, Nashville and Franklin. Each scenario lasts a set number of turns, the winner being the person (it's a one or two player game) who accrues the most victory points during the game by reaching and holding objectives and destroying enemy units.

There's an orders and combat phase for each turn, the orders being given to individual units via menus in much the same way as for *Halls Of Montezuma*. Though the system is similar, there are differences to reflect the time period: for example, turn the out-of-place modern 'radio option' off and your lines of communication to HQ's and subordinate units are more realistic and much ropier, being influenced by the weather and the like, which makes it a much more exciting game especially when you opt for hidden movement as well.

SSG have come up with the goods again. The system is easy to use and the game plays well. It'll take months to work through every scenario and every option and then you can go back and create your own scenarios with the designer option included. ●

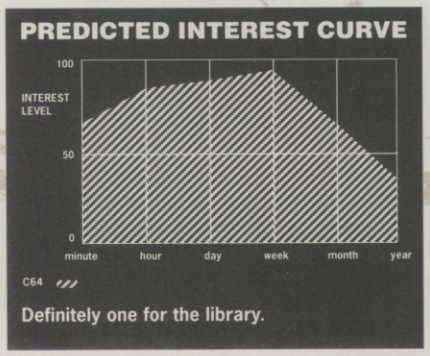
RELEASE BOX		
C64/128	£18.95dk	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£24.95dk	OUT NOW

C64 VERSION

Graphics and sound are fine, the game plays well, and you should get bags of entertainment from it.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 916



ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF WAR: ANCIENT BATTLES

CCS bring on the elephants

RELEASE BOX		
C64/128	£18.95dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.95dk	OUT NOW

SPECTRUM VERSION

The package comes with two tapes: 128K owners only need the one tape which contains the main program and the scenarios. 48K owners need to use both tapes, and they are unable to fight the Chalons scenario.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	N/A	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 742

PC VERSION

The graphics are very basic and you can forget about sound. The ordering system is friendly and takes little time to get to grips with.

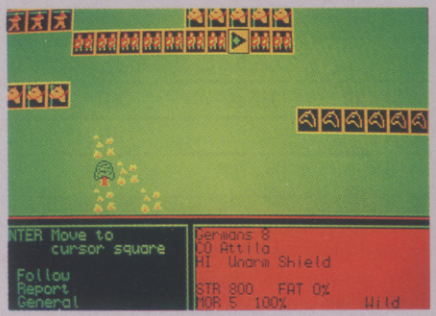
GRAPHICS	4	IQ FACTOR	7
AUDIO	N/A	FUN FACTOR	6

ACE RATING 742

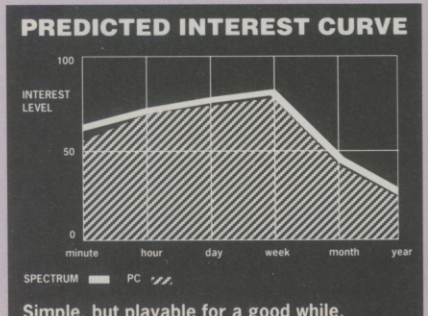
KICKING off R.T.Smith's series of wargames chronicling warfare from earliest to modern times, is this wargame covering ancient battles – complete with ancient units including elephants and scythed chariots. The one or two player game comes complete with five scenarios and a design option that allows you not only to mix and match a variety of armies but also to design maps and scenarios.

The sequence of play starts with the issue of orders to your side (the numbers of orders allowed depends on the number of generals you have on the field) and then involves waiting while your opponent does the same before combat (including both ranged weapons and hand-to-hand) is resolved and your units get another chance to move. Issuing orders is simplicity itself: select a unit, move the cursor to the desired spot and hit enter. Then decide which units should follow the ordered unit and which units should go elsewhere.

It's not as detailed, or as good, as his previous games, with the number of options open to you during play being limited, but it plays well and the design option means you'll get a lot of play from the game. Worth looking at especially if you're interested in the period. ●



Asking for reports on your units provides you with useful infomation.



BREACH

OMNITREND's Space Marines

IF you read the *Paladin* review in ACE Issue 19, you should have some idea of what *Breach* is all about. For those of you who didn't, it's a simple tactical wargame, with 10 missions for you to complete (extra scenario disks containing 16 missions are available). You control a small squad (the actual number depends on the scenario) of Space Marines, one of which is the squad leader. Complete the mission and you'll find your squad leader's attributes upgraded (shooting accuracy for instance): allow him to be killed, though, and you have to create a new squad leader by using the scenario-builder that's incorporated, allowing you to alter existing scenarios or create entirely new scenarios.

Every mission is timed, and has a different objective: for example, the Breeder scenario requires you to rescue some prisoners from an alien complex within 30 minutes of game time (each turn lasts 30 seconds of game time). Movement during the game depends on the individual squad member's movement points. Points are used up by moving, firing, picking up objects and so on. Once you've used up all your squad's movement points, click on the icon and the computer moves its forces.

Breach is very easy to play and as a solo game it's not half bad. There are some annoying parts of the game (you can't move through a square occupied by someone else for example, causing you to make frequent and costly detours) but once you know about them, you can compensate. The overall verdict is simple but playable, and the designer option will keep you busy for some while. ●

Squad leader Mahoon prepares to take out some alien opposition.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.95dk	IMMINENT
MAC	£24.95dk	IMMINENT

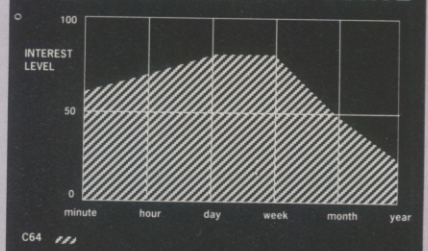
AMIGA VERSION

As in *Paladin*, the graphics are very simple but the sound effects are good. If you're after an easy-to-play game in the *Rebelstar* mould, you could do worse.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 761

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Easy and enjoyable to play.

FIRST OVER GERMANY

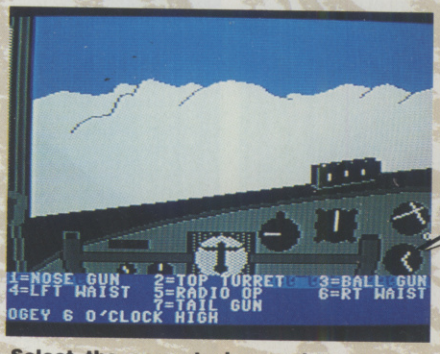
Fly through the air with SSI

ENGLAND, 1942. The American 306th Bomber Group arrive at their new base in Thurleigh to help in the war effort. Step back in time with SSI and take charge of one of 306's B-17's to see if you've got what it takes to win promotion.

Before you set off on any of the 25 missions included in the game you'll have to get used to flying one of these huge planes, so there are a couple of training missions for you to complete first, including take-off and landing practice, take-off and forming up with a group of airborne planes, and bombing practice.

It's very easy to fly the plane, so it's not long before you're into the missions and the game proper. You view the plane from directly above with the simplified instrument panel taking up the bottom portion of the screen. Should you run into enemy fighters, the screen switches to a cockpit view with a report of where the enemy plane (the Bogey) is, i.e. "Bogey at 3 O' Clock low." Then you hit a key to switch to a gun that's in a position to shoot at the enemy and try to blow him out of the sky before he can inflict any damage on your craft and jeopardise the mission.

First Over Germany is much more of an arcade game than it is a strategy game, so don't expect anything more from it. As an action game, though, it is quite fun, and the 25 missions available should certainly keep you playing for a while. ●



Select the correct view and prepare to down them before they down you!

RELEASE BOX		
C64/128	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£29.99dk	Mid-April

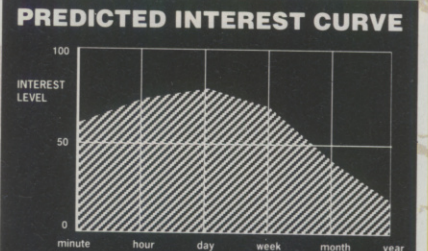
C64 VERSION

The graphics and sound are fine. It's very easy to get into and play, but you'll have completed it in a relatively short time.

GRAPHICS	6	IQ FACTOR	4
AUDIO	2	FUN FACTOR	8

ACE RATING 725

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



More arcade than wargame. Simple fun.

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Complete your 20 missions, grouped in five levels of four in order to graduate form the "Galcorp Academy" for advanced skimmer pilots.

TAU CETI
In 2050 the first wave of colonists left earth for the nearby solar system of Tau Ceti, as the first waves of man's great adventure. On the inhospitable desert world of Tau CetiIII a new life began. In ninety years thirty great cities were built, until, without warning a great plague decimated the new world. The remaining desperate colonists were evacuated and in time a cure was found. An expedition force was dispatched and then destroyed by the now malfunctioning defence systems. The only way to incapacitate the automatic defenders was to shut down the massive fusion reactor that fueled the planet. It was decided that single highly skilled pilot in an armed ground skimmer might succeed where fifty would surely would surely fail. Like a fool you volunteered!

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April '89

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NETHERWORLD
Guide your ship through acid bubbles, demon dragons, goats heads and mines in search of diamonds – possibly the strongest release in terms of blastability!

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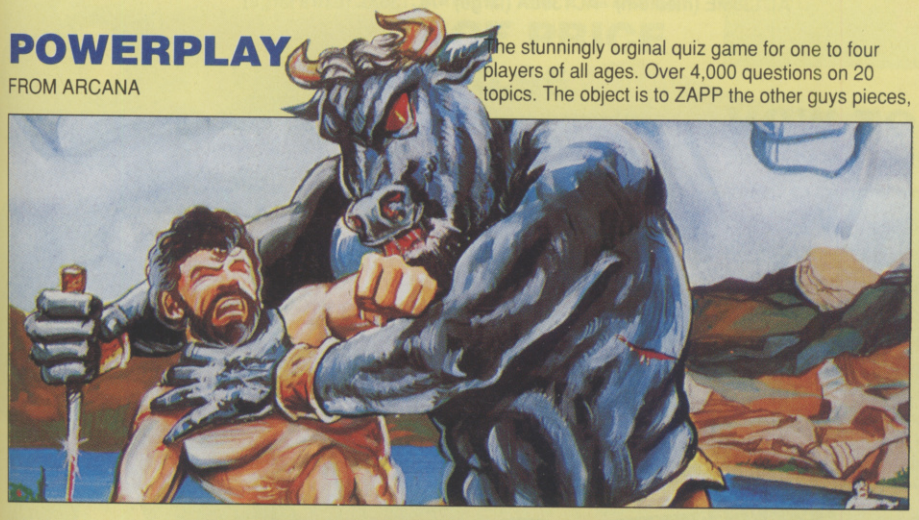
One of the best blasters to date, quality graphics whilst flying space-ships and accumulating weapons.

ACE GREAT GAMES

POWERPLAY

FROM ARCANA



The stunningly orginal quiz game for one to four players of all ages. Over 4,000 questions on 20 topics. The object is to ZAPP the other guys pieces, which involves moving adjacent to them and engaging them in combat. This is easier said than done though because of the way the games quiz element intrudes. Get the questions wrong and move to one of three arenas; Medusas Cave, a mountain-top or a lava-pool.

"If you are thinking of buying a quiz game this has to be the one" Andy Wilton, Ace

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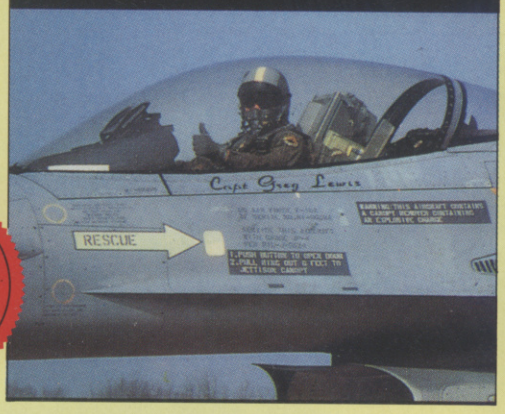
FROM DIGITAL INTEGRATION

Based on he Aircraft F-16 Fighting Falcon this flight simulator takes you through four basic games:- training, a set of five missions, a campaign game and a one-to-one dogfight. As squadron leader, brief your crew on weapon loading and then protect us all from enemy invasions.

"The mix between action and realism is terrific" Andy Smith Ace May '89

See the full review in this issue!



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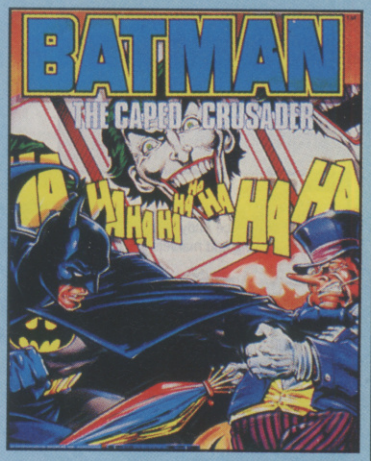
Starting in the Batcave, with control of Batman you must save Gotham City from the dastardly criminal plans of the two villains- "Great fun to play!"-Andy Smith Ace issue 16



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C64DIS	14.95	12.95	AC213CD
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ATARI ST	19.95	14.95	AC213ST
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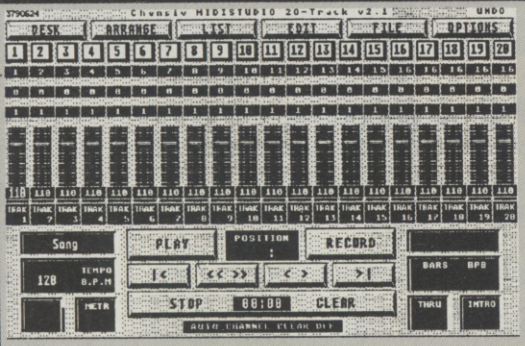

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Midistudio is a 20 track Midi Music Studio. This Midi software package is a realistically priced introduction to Midi music processing and includes the following features.
20 tracks each assignable one of 16 midi channels, each track can be transposed up or down 2 octaves, the main screen features full tape deck controls with individual volume sliders for each track, note editing facilities including editing of pitch, octave, duration and velocity, plus full midi controller editing(pitch bend, mod wheel. etc.). Full control over phrases is offered through Quantizing, transposing, and phrase arrangement software pages. The arrangement facilities allow moving and copying phrases on any of the 20 tracks. The package is easy to use and is a strong competitor with Pro 24.

" Out performs Pro-24 v2.1 in almost every way "
Atari ST User Jan 89

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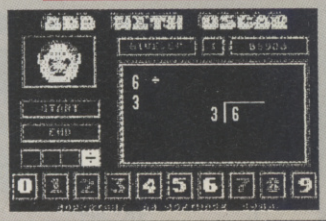
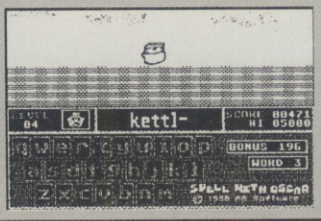
Add with Oscar is a fully mouse controlled educational game with full colour screens and sound for teaching addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to children. This program has selectable difficulty levels and a Hi-Score table.





Spell With Oscar £12.99

Spell with Oscar is a game which teaches spelling, keyboard skills and motor coordination. Pictures of objects move smoothly accross the screen and the pupil should spell the name of the object while Oscar checks for mistakes. Spell also incorporates selectable dificulty levels and a Hi-score table. **Extra data disks £5.99**

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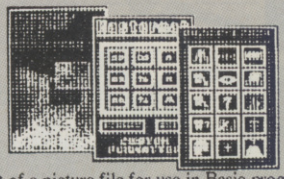
Mastermat is a formatter that optimises disk space, allows non standard sector and track formats/ fast read format.

Picstrip is a utility that captures all or part of a picture file for use in Basic programs, supports GFA, FAST, HISOFT and ST Basics and is Degas, Neochrome and AB Animator compatible.



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THE ACE SERIAL

The Git In The Machine: 8

Horace Claghandle looked at the wreckage of the Kiddiemate Deluxe as it lay in a pool of tepid water in the shower unit. Mr Bludgeon had just been taken away to the hospital by crane, and the manager of the department store was pacing up and down, itemising damaged items, clucking worriedly and generally looking ill.

"Who's going to pay for it all, that's what I want to know?" he said picking up a bent zinc alloy backplate securing screw #301/AA and comparing it with his checklist.

"Couldn't give a flying..." started Horace Claghandle, rather excited at having finally disposed of his electronic arch-enemy. His ejaculation was cut short by Mavis Claghandle's handbag striking him in the ear.

"You'll have to forgive him, your worship, he's rather highly strung."

"Bollocks, mother." said Horace Claghandle.

The store was closed at half past five, and by six o' clock was completely deserted. Deserted, that is, except for Horace Claghandle, who'd escaped from his mother's clutches by stabbing her in the knee with a propelling pencil then jumping out of the car at a set of traffic lights. He'd gained entry to the store by climbing up through the sewers – a trick he'd learned while stalking N'Gar Thrombobo at the Grimleythorpesdale Municipal Sewerage Disposal Plant – finally gaining entry to the bathroom department by means of an oversized bidet.

He was in luck. The builders hadn't arrived yet to clear up the mess. He slipped out of his hiding place, swept up all the remains of the Kiddiemate Deluxe into a box and then:

- pushed the wreckage through a waste disposal unit in the kitchen department
- repeatedly drove over the bits with a six-hundredweight lawn-roller in the garden department
- threw the pieces into a Magiflame industrial smelting furnace in the crafts department
- decanted the molten metal into individual billets and irradiated them for three hours in the educational department's 2 billion kilowatt cyclotron
- beat them into a series of monomolecular metallic films in the jewellery department
- tore them to pieces and jumped up and down on them until the men from the Grimleythorpesdale Lunatic Asylum came to take him away

N'Gar Thrombobo might be safely assumed, then, to be no more. Or at least that would be the case but for the fact that Horace Claghandle had unfortunately missed the one and a half square inches of crumpled floppy disk that had lodged in the flesh of Mr Bludgeon's ample posterior.

"Arrggh! Bloody 'ell!" yelled Mr Bludgeon as the nurse cut away his trousers.

"Relax, Mr Bludgeon, this won't hurt a bit." said the nurse, accidentally stabbing one of Mr Bludgeon's rather amorphous buttocks with her scissors.

"I think we will have to take Mr Bloody, L, into the theatre, nurse." said Mr Colon the surgeon, addressing a mop handle propped up against the wall. He removed his glasses and polished them on Mr Bludgeon's necktie then put them on upside down. "Where exactly is it?"

"If you think I'm going to have that bloody four-eyed git shoving bloody scalpels up me bloody arf-fghhh..." said Mr Bludgeon through three inches of hospital pillow suddenly placed over his gob.

"Now, now, Mr Bludgeon," said the nurse, sitting on the pillow, "you should just relax. Doctor knows what's best."

"Quite right nurse!" said Mr Colon as he fell out of the window, "Now where the hell's that draught coming fro..." There was a rather unpleasant splat in the road outside, but Mr Bludgeon didn't hear it, being ever so slightly unconscious.

N'Gar Thrombobo was confused. The last thing he remembered was taking a shower, but this didn't really fit in with his previous world-gestalt of being a near-omnipotent electronic superbeing. He reconfigured some of the magnetic particles to form a crude sensor so that he could explore his immediate surroundings. And the results were very perplexing. He seemed to be enveloped in a mass of tepid, wobbling...stodge.

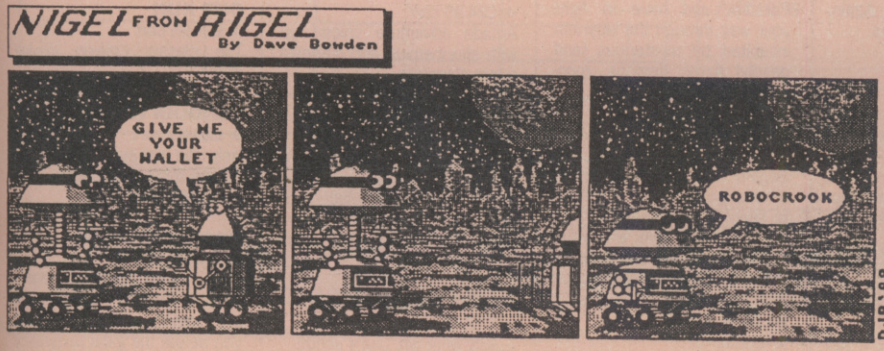
Suddenly there was a brilliant light, and his momentarily overloaded sensors blacked out. Then he could make out four white walls, fluorescent tubes, nurses in masks...

"I'm alive!" he cried, realigning some of the floppy's magnetic particles into a makeshift loudspeaker membrane which was, unfortunately, loud enough to be heard only by a hypersensitive gnat three millimetres away.

"I can't thank you all enough!" he enthused as one of the nurses threw the mangled floppy fragment into a bag.

"This really is most awfully, awfully kind." he said as the bag was thrown into the hospital incinerator.

"I really am the most awfully lucky chap." he mused, albeit in a slightly worried tone as his sensors noted a not entirely insignificant rise of 1,500 degrees Celcius in the ambient temperature of the immediate surroundings...



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THE ACE GUIDE TO CONSOLE GAMES

There's no point owning a console without games to play on it. But what's out there? Here's the ACE guide to console games that are available NOW.

SEGA

ACTION FIGHTER
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This shoot-em-up features a motorbike not dissimilar to the one in *Hang-On*, but bristling with high-tech weaponry. Not only that, but it can transform into an aircraft or car...

AFTER BURNER
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The console version of the (in)famous arcade game. Airborne dogfighting action, if no Rock 'n' Roll.

ALEX KIDD
★ £22.95 cart
Journey through the planet Aries to the city of Radactian and save it from the evil Janken the Great. The game's an arcade adventure with big cartoon-like sprites. It's got loads of appeal for younger gameplayers.

ALEX KIDD – THE LOST STARS
★ £24.95 cart
The sequel to the above game. It's in much the same vein as the original game, but this time you're out to return some stars that have been pinched from the heavens above the planet Aries. Again, for younger gameplayers.

ALIEN SYNDROME
★ £24.95 cart
A viewed-from-above maze cum shoot-em-up game set in space. You have to rescue friends trapped on various levels of an alien spaceship. Features huge, grotesque end-of-level guardians.

ASTRO WARRIOR / PIT POT
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Two games on one cartridge here. *Astro Warrior*'s a simple *Space Invaders*-type shoot-em-up and *Pit Pot* is a simple maze game. Both games are simple but enjoyable.

AZTEC ADVENTURE
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You are in the legendary Aztec Paradise and have to fight your way through the labyrinth inhabited by mysterious (and deadly) Aztec demons, monsters and spirits.

BANK PANIC
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Sega's version of the ancient arcade game where you have to shoot bank robbers as they come into the bank and avoid shooting the innocent citizens who are depositing money.

BLACK BELT
★ £22.95 cart
This is a viewed-side-on beat-em-up in which you have to prove you're worthy of owning a black belt by defeating numerous enemies.

CAPTAIN SILVER
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A horizontally-scrolling combat game.

CHOPLIFTER
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Another old arcade game this. You're flying a helicopter across horizontally-scrolling scenery, bombing baddies and rescuing goodies.

ENDURO RACER
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Climb aboard your Dirt Bike and go racing, against the clock, over several courses complete with bumps and other riders to avoid.

FANTASY ZONE
★ £22.95 cart
Another one for younger gameplayers. Huge cartoon sprites abound as you troll round gathering coins to buy parts and arms for your spaceship. Then you're ready to blast some aliens.

FANTASY ZONE II
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The sequel to the above game in much the same vein, plus a few extras.

F16 FIGHTER
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As a pilot of an F16 Fighting Falcon, your mission is to seek out and destroy as many enemy aircraft as you can while remaining airborne.

GANGSTER TOWN
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For use with the Light Phaser. You're an FBI agent in the 1920s, pursuing a gang of smugglers. There's only one rule – shoot first, ask questions later.

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GLOBAL DEFENSE
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It's a game of two halves: offensive in which you try to destroy as many missiles as you can before they hit the Earth, and defensive in which you try to destroy as many missiles as you can before they hit the Earth!

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You need extra-sharp reflexes and a keen eye to master this tough sports simulation.

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Being a fearless Samurai called Hayato, it's your job to defeat the evil warlocks, grab the scrolls and recover the sword of the Dragon King from the warlocks' castle in Edo.

KUNG FU KID
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This cartoon-style beat-em-up is no pushover. The opponents are tough (fortunately you can rely on your talisman to keep you out much of the trouble) and numerous.

LORD OF THE SWORD
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An arcade adventure this one. Hack, slay and map along a horizontally-scrolling landscape.

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You need the 3D glasses for this maze exploration game.

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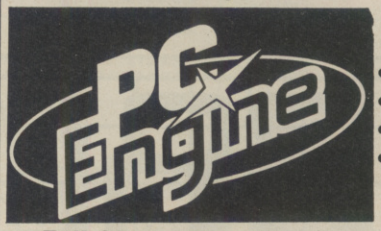

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A horizontally-scrolling hack-em-up with plenty of things to collect, swing on and chop. A very good game that won't go amiss in your collection.

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PCS – WHAT HAVE TI

Erstwhile PC PLUS editor, Matt Nicholson, gives us the low-down on PCs and how they measure up against today's 16-bit machines. If you're thinking of upgrading your system, is a PC a viable option?

Should you buy a PC? The specification of the IBM PC is nothing to write home about, particularly when compared to modern 16-bit machines. Nevertheless, the PC and its compatibles have outsold all the Amigas, STs and Macintoshes put together – by at least a factor of ten. The reason is simple: those three letters, IBM.

IBM is by far the biggest computer manufacturer in the world, and has been since the mid-fifties. To give you an idea of just how big, consider this: between 1960 and 1972 the rest of the industry made a combined loss of over $1,000 billion; IBM made a pre-tax profit of over $9,000 billion. The second largest computer company in Japan is IBM's Japanese branch. This is largely irrelevant to the home user, as by far the greatest part of IBM's business is in mainframe and mini-computers. However, back in the early eighties IBM launched its PC, the Personal Computer, and it was an inevitable success. Big business had been looking for a desktop computer, but felt uneasy buying large quantities from young upstart companies like Apple and Commodore. IBM was a name they knew and could trust. 'Nobody gets fired for buying IBM', as the old adage goes.

Other companies, anxious to jump on the bandwagon, started copying the IBM design and producing micros that could run IBM software. The PC became a standard and now probably over 80 percent of the micros sold in the world today are compatibles.

WORKERS PLAYTIME

The original PC was designed very much with the home environment in mind – it had a cassette port, could be plugged into a TV, and booted up to a version of the BASIC programming language just like any other home computer. In the States the IBM PC was seen as a home machine from the start, but in the UK it took Alan Sugar to launch the PC1512 at £399 plus VAT, and at last a full feature PC compatible was available in high-street stores from a name everyone knew. The PC design became viable as a home computer in the UK.

There are however a huge number of PC designs around, ranging in price from a couple of hundred to over £10,000. Deciding to buy an IBM compatible is the easy part!

SOFTWARE

THe fact that the PC had been considered a home computer in the States for the last eight years meant that there was a considerable base of games software ready for the Amstrad PC1512. Although some of the US titles are a bit dated, at least they are not poor conversions of Spectrum or C64 games. Indeed many are not available on any machine except the PC, or are only just being converted. Microsoft's *Flight Simulator*, for example, and many titles from Microprose and Electronic Arts are PC-only.

Meanwhile UK companies have started producing PC versions side-by-side with Amiga and ST releases. Many games houses now regard the PC as important a market as the Amiga, although sales tend to be considerably lower than for the ST. Games prices tend to be comparable, too.

But without doubt the PC's strength is in business software. For every word processor or spreadsheet on the Amiga or ST there are ten or twenty for the PC, many cheaper and more powerful. If you are looking for a games machine the PC is not the best choice, but if you want to mix business with pleasure the PC is a sure-fire winner.

HIGHER SPEEDS

The basic PC used an 8088 processor running at 4.77MHz, and was almost too slow to merit the label '16-bit'. Most clones these days use the faster 8086 processor running at 8MHz which, though not nearly as nippy as an Amiga or ST, is considerably faster than most 8-bit machines with the possible exception of the BBC Model B.

Most clones come with at least 512K of RAM, and 640K is now the norm. It is not worth putting more than 640K of RAM into a basic PC as the MS-DOS operating system – under which most software runs – won't recognise the extra. There are ways round this limit, but these involve special hardware and are beyond the scope of this feature! A basic PC clone, with just a single 5.25-inch 360K floppy disk drive, can be had for around £450 these days.

The IBM AT introduced the faster 80286, a true 16-bit processor running at 8MHz. Most clones nowadays run at least at 10MHz, and even 20MHz is becoming common; resulting in a machine that can feel as fast as an ST or Amiga. Prices are rather higher, with basic monochrome machines coming in at around £1100. A hard disk model with decent colour graphics, such as the new Amstrad PC2286, would cost nearer £1800.

The fastest IBM compatibles use the 32-bit 80386 processor running at anywhere from 16 to 25MHz, and are well capable of matching the competition when it comes to speed. However these machines are pricey: the cheapest would set you back over £3200 for a colour machine with 4 Mbyte of memory and 65 Mbyte hard disk drive.

Although several budget priced PC compatibles have recently been launched, such as the Sinclair P200, Schneider's Euro PC or the Olivetti PC1, it is the faster and more expensive machines that are better when it comes to games. Many flight simulators are only really playable on a 286 with decent graphic display.

GRAPHICS & MONITORS

For a supposedly standard design, the IBM PC is extremely confusing when it comes to the display. This is largely due to the modular nature of the PC, as the electronics that drive the screen are actually mounted on an expansion card, called a 'Graphics Adaptor' (American spelling), which means that they can be changed at will.

The original PC came either with an extremely clear text- only adaptor, called the Monochrome Display Adaptor (MDA); or with a rather less clear Colour Graphics Adaptor (CGA) that was capable of displaying a number of graphics modes. The colour mode displays four colours at a resolution of 320 by 200 pixels, and it was this mode that was used by most games authors until recently. The CGA adaptor is also capable of displaying monochrome graphics or 16-colour text at a resolution of 640 by 200, this last being the most common mode for business software.

A further limitation of the colour display is that only three combinations of four colours can be used – the most common being a rather bizarre mix of purple, light blue, black and white. Some games, *Elite* for example, thankfully use green, red, yellow and black.

To make up for the low text quality of CGA, Hercules introduced the Hercules Graphics Card (HGC) which could display high quality monochrome graphics and high quality text. It became very popular and is still the standard for monochrome displays, providing a resolution of 720 by 348 pixels. However, although it is compatible with CGA when displaying text, it is totally incompatible when it comes to graphics. Games software written for CGA graphics will not run on a Hercules machine.

IBM eventually produced a decent display with the Enhanced Graphics Adapter (EGA). This offers a respectable 16 colours from a palette of 64 at a resolution of up to 640 by 350 pixels. It is fully compatible with MDA and CGA, but needless to say cannot display graphics written for a Hercules display. It is now the standard for colour graphics on IBM compatibles, and most games now support both CGA and EGA – some, such as adventures from Magnetic Scrolls, only display pictures on the EGA version. The Amstrad PC1512 offers CGA graphics in both its colour and monochrome models, converting colours to shades of grey for the monochrome display. It also offers a 16-colour mode that boasts a similar resolution to EGA - but is totally incompatible. Little software has been written for this mode, although it is supported by the friendly GEM window and mouse interface packaged with the machine.

The Amstrad PC1640 offers either straight CGA or EGA on its

TEY GOT TO OFFER?

colour models – or Hercules on the monochrome version. This generated considerable confusion when it was launched as many assumed that it followed the example of the mono 1512 and were disappointed to find it would not run most games.

In 1987 IBM introduced the VGA display. This can display all EGA modes, plus several others including 16 colours at a resolution of 640 by 480, and 256 colours at a resolution of 320 by 200. The colours for this last mode can be selected from an amazing 262,144, making it capable of displays that from a distance look as clear as a photograph, and are certainly the equal of the Amiga or ST. This mode does, however, require an analogue monitor for display which tends to cost around £150 more than the usual TTL monitor. Other modes can be displayed adequately on an ordinary display.

Most 286 and 386 compatibles offer VGA display. VGA is not yet vital for the purchaser wanting to mix pleasure with business, but is where the future lies.

SOUND

The IBM's sound capabilities are notable by their absence. There is a loudspeaker, but that's about it – the only sound the machine itself supports is a beep.

Programmers have used all sorts of clever techniques for generating more interesting noises, and indeed most games manage the odd zap and ptang as well. *Galactic Conqueror* from Titus actually includes a short burst of sampled music, but no one ever bought a PC for its musical prowess.

But for those with the money, the PC is worth considering. There are a number of 'intelligent' MIDI interface expansion cards available for around £150 that, with the right software and MIDI instrument, turn the PC into a full MIDI controller – rather more powerful than the Atari in fact, as the ST's built-in MIDI port is only passive.

DRIVES

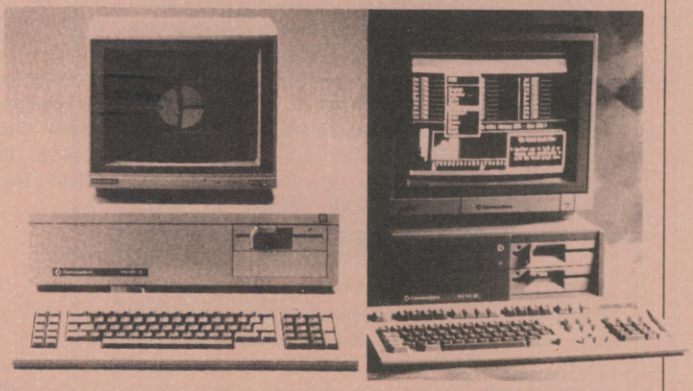
The standard PC uses 5.25-inch floppy disks each storing 360K of data, and most software is issued in that format. The AT design also uses 5.25-inch disks, but crams 1.2 Mbyte onto them. AT compatibles can read 360K disks, but some of the copy protection systems used by games publishers cause problems.

IBM chose to join the rest of the world with its PS/2 range, and fitted 3.5-inch disk drives. These store either 720K or 1.44 Mbyte on a disk, and do seem to be catching on with software publishers. Most software these days is either issued in both 5.25 and 3.5-inch format, or you can exchange the 5.25-inch disk with the publisher for a 3.5-inch version.

You can also add hard disk drives to any IBM compatible, which can store anything from 20 Mbyte upwards and are considerably faster. A 20 Mbyte drive for the PC can be had for around £200.

MICE & JOYSTICKS

Many software packages will take input from a mouse or a joystick. The Microsoft mouse has become a bit of a standard here, although this is quite expensive. The Amstrad PC1512 and 1640 both come with a mouse, but unfortunately it is not totally compatible with the Microsoft model – it usually works fine, but seems to have problems running with Microsoft software.



The original IBM design also catered for a joystick in that it produced an expansion card that could be plugged into the PC, and which provided sockets for one or two analogue joysticks. The catch is the price: compatible joystick cards cost around £25, while the joysticks cost around £20. Fortunately the two are often bundled together – Konix, for example, do a kit for £30.

The Amstrad PC1512 and 1640 also come with a joystick socket, but this is for a switched Atari-style unit and is completely incompatible with the IBM interface. Most US software supports the IBM interface, while most UK software provides an Amstrad option as well. The good news is that the Amstrad joystick is effectively part of the keyboard, so if the software allows you to 'configure the keys' it is frequently possible to substitute joystick movements instead. It has been dropped on the PC2000 range.

ACE MACHINE?

No one in their right mind would buy an IBM clone just to play games – you would need to spend thousands to get a machine anywhere near the spec of an Amiga or ST.

Nevertheless, as a machine for doing serious work, the PC is second to none; and not too bad as a games machine either. If you work from home, or if you frequently bring work home, the PC is an ideal purchase. Buy a PC and you will never end up in a computing backwater, either.

MAIN MACHINES

Make & model	Price inc VAT	RAM	Processor	Disk Drive	Display Adaptor	Software	Comments
Sinclair PC200	£574	512K	8086 8MHz	3.5" 720K	CGA colour	GEM and Basic Four games	Comes with joystick.
Schneider Euro PC	£631	512K	8088 10MHz	3.5" 720K	CGA colour	Microsoft Works	Limited on expansion.
Olivetti PC1	£574	512K	V40 8MHz	3.5" 720K	CGA colour	First Choice package	One expansion slot.
Amstrad PC1640	£804	640K	8086 8MHz	5.25" 360K	EGA colour	GEM and Basic	Three expansion slots.
Amstrad PC2086	£862	640K	8086 8MHz	3.5" 720K	VGA colour	Windows and Basic	Price for single floppy drive.
IBM Model 30	£1491	640K	8086 8MHz	3.5" 720K	Herc mono	–	Price for twin floppy drive.
Amstrad PC2286	£1322	1Mb	80286 12MHz	3.5" 1.44Mb	VGA colour	Windows and Basic	Price for twin floppy drive.
Amstrad PC2386	£3219	4Mb	80386 20MHz	3.5" 1.44Mb	VGA colour	Windows and Basic	Price for 65Mb hard disk drive.
IBM Model 70	£7467	2Mb	80386 25MHz	3.5" 1.44Mb	VGA colour	–	Price with 120Mb hard disk drive.

CONSOLE HARDWARE UPGRADE GUIDE

	SEGA	NINTENDO
RANGE	Mastersystem, Mastersystem Plus (includes Light Phaser and an extra game) and The Super System (includes Light Phaser and 3D glasses, plus 3D game.	The Control Deck (including Super Mario Bros), the Deluxe Set (including Robot – R.O.B. – and Zapper gun).
PRICES	The recommended retail prices are: Mastersystem £79.95, Mastersystem Plus £99.95 and the Super System £129.95. Accessories: Light Phaser £29.95 (with game cartridge £44.95), 3D glasses £39.95, control stick £14.95 and control pads £6.95 – note, the mini-sticks which were used with the control pads are no longer available. Sega have also recently released a rapid fire unit costing £5.95	The recommended retail prices are: Control Deck £99.95, Deluxe Set £149.95, Zapper gun £24.95, R.O.B. £49.95 and joystick £39.95.
MONITORS	A/V out and R/F out. The system's designed to plug straight into a T.V.	R/F out, separate audio and video out sockets. The Nintendo is designed to plug straight into a domestic T.V.
DRIVES, MICE & JOYSTICKS	The console supports two joysticks, the Light Phaser plugs into joystick port two. The 3D glasses slot into the card slot on the front of the console. Joysticks and pads have two buttons on each for game selection/firing.	The Nintendo supports two joysticks. The robot utilises the second port via the second controller.
SOFTWARE	Most of Sega's arcade games find their way onto the console, so there are plenty of action games to play. There are also a large number of games with extra appeal to younger gameplayers.	Super Mario Bros is one of the best games ever released, for either console or home computer so it's almost worth owning a system for that one game. Since the Nintendo launch in late '86 the range of software has been awful. The Japanese and Americans have had hundreds of games to choose from whereas we Brits have had precious few. Nintendo reckon that's all about to change though, and will be releasing 2-4 games per month.
PROSPECTS	The Sega console has dominated the U.K. console market for the last year-18 months, thanks to Nintendo's poor launch into the market at the end of '86. Games have since continued to come out at a steady rate of 4-5 per month for the console, and will continue to do so.	At the time of going to press the prospects look good, then again the prospects looked good when the machine was first launched.
OVERALL	If all you want to do is play games, all you need is a console. The Sega is currently the better supported machine but the Nintendo may soon start giving it a run for its money.	The Nintendo is a great machine, most of the software arcade style games, but there are some educational titles available. The Japanese machines can be fitted with extra disk drives and other widgets but the British models can't as yet, so you're still only going to be able to play games on the machine for the foreseeable future.
RATINGS	**Graphics 4** **Sound 3** **Software:** **Range 3** **Quality 3** **Prospects 4**	**Graphics 4** **Sound 3** **Software:** **Range 1** **Quality 3** **Prospects 3**

PINK WARRIOR COMPETITION

What would we do without Woody from US Gold? The kind lady has already given us loads of Dragonlance books to give away as prizes, and now she's giving us yet more! Dragonlance Tales is a three volume set of exciting ...erm... tales. And Heroes is a two-volume set all about ...wait for it, wait for it ... heroes.

To win this glorious, sparkling 'wouldn't swap my new one for two old ones' prize, all you have to do (is the Shake 'n' Vac?) is send us a postcard or stuck-down envelope telling us in what years the War of the Lance started and finished. Send your answers to PINK WARRIOR, ACE at the Bath address and make sure they arrive before May 5.

LOOK BOOKS!

So, just how heavy were those special collector's editions of Dragonlance Chronicles and Legends? You had some pretty wild guesses, ranging from 1,000 grammes to 5,500 grammes. The actual answer (as weighed on our postal scales) was 2089 grammes. No-one got it spot on, but the closest guess of 2110 grammes came from D. Liu of Doncaster. Congrats, and they'll be in the post soon.

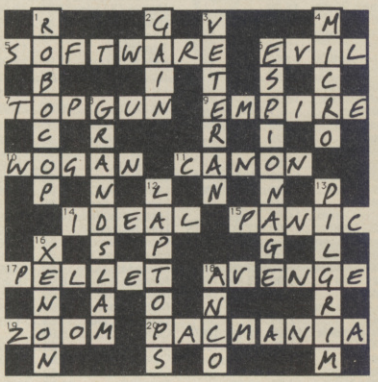
A PUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY... ETC

Groan! No more! No more! The Pink Puns you sent in were AWFUL! Truly terrible – they've had the office in stitches for weeks, well done.

Some of the wittier ones included: The Sound Of Ewe-sick, and Piddler on the Hoof from R Nicholls of Bradford. Roy Kay had a few goodies: Run Silent, Run Sheep, One Ewe Over The Cuckoo's Nest and Baatrek – The Search For Flock. Daniel Barnett of Swansea gave us a chuckle with Good Morning Vietlamb and Peter Young nearly scooped the prize with, amongst others: Ro-Bo-Peep, Wool Metal Jacket and Chop Gun. But the winner has to be Paul Bowden of London with the classics: The Lambs That Time Forgot, An American Werewool in London, Zombie Fleece Eaters (a cracker that) and the never-to-be-forgotten A Ruminant With A View. Well done Paul, and cheers for pointing out the following REAL film titles: The Sheepman (1958) starring Glen Ford. Lady Caroline Lamb (1972) starring Laurence Olivier and the French film The Sheep Has Five Legs (1954). Tee-hee! Have fun with the chromalin Paul!

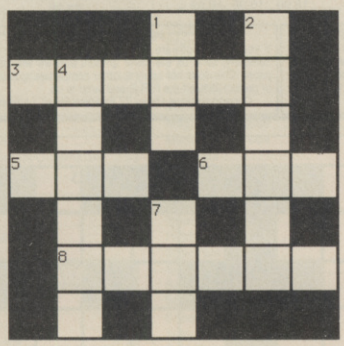
SOLUTION TO PRIZE CROSSWORD NO12

The first correct entry pulled from the sack came from Christopher Frost of Beckenham in Kent. The completed crossword should have looked like this:



THE ACE PRIZE PUZZLE NO14

No! This is not another crossword – it's a cross number! All of the values in the grid are based on three unknowns, represented by the letters A, C and E.



CLUES.

1. E
2. A*C
3. A (squared)
4. E (squared)
5. A+C-E
6. C
7. A
8. C (squared)

Simply find the values for A, C and E. Compute the missing numbers and fit them all in the grid. Easy! – or is it?

Instead of trying to work this out with pencil and paper, why not devise a simple listing that will allow your micro to solve it for you?

I THINK

A=

C=

E=

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

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.....**COMPUTER OWNED**.....

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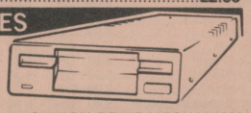

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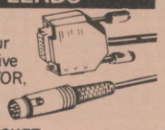

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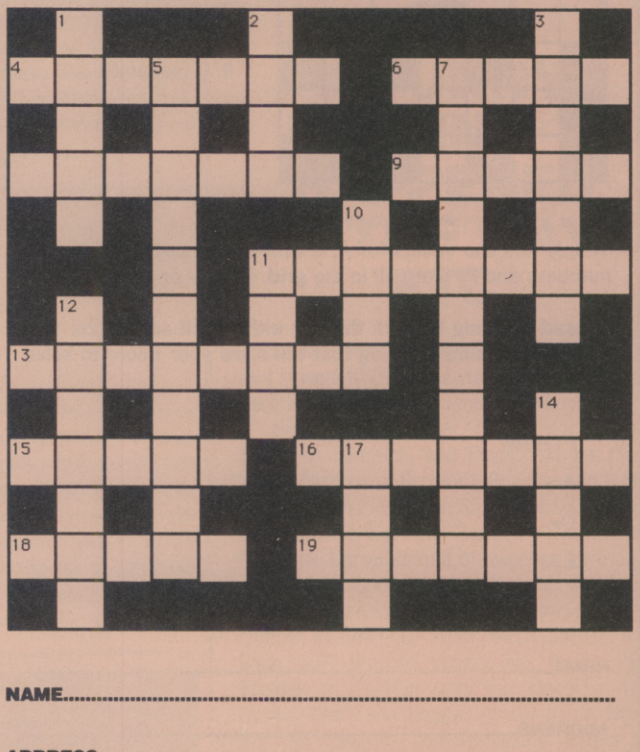

Here it is folks! The same crossword as last month, but this time with the correct grid! Wow! Congratulations go to everyone who managed to complete the crossword and draw their own grid, (especially Frank Hollis of Harlow, who wins himself a special prize, and sorry, but you'll have to sit this one out while we give everyone a chance to do the crossword without having to design a grid.

The first correct entry from the postbag wins a voucher worth £25 redeemable through the ACE special offers pages. Closing date for entries is May 5. The ACE crossword is cryptic. The answer might be an anagram, or formed from the end of one word and the beginning of another, or simply hinted at in the clue. Most, but not quite all, of the answers are computer related.

ACROSS

4. Motorists teeing off (7)
6. Reversal of input and output circuits to make razor sharp (5)
8. In case the bounder forms a software house (7)
9. Early form of electronic device (5)
11. Cruel, she sabotaged game from Gremlin (8)
13. Pity male characters running round in school break (8)
15. Ten to one backing for leading Norwegian game (5)
16. River Liffey flowing from Ocean (7)
18. Time to get boy a computer (5)
19. Host prepared to introduce heated game from Addictive (7)

DOWN

1. Night vision (5)
2. Key to get free of network (4)
3. Mercenary software house (7)
5. The way to win a game from Imagine (7,4)
7. Herman's family game (3,8)
10. Drive-in surgery (4)
11. Icy greeting (4)
12. Boy unhappy at first to get game (4,3)
14. Goal to develop student computer language (5)
17. Flip coin to get a screen symbol (4)

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

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LATE WINNERS.

One heck of an Oops! this one. Way back in November, in conjunction with Activision we ran a glorious compo offering a stunning Amstrad Studio 100 multitack recording studio and a Casio HT700 polyphonic synth with MIDI. The two lucky winners who never managed to make it into print were: Terence Kent from the Isle of Wight and Haresh Bhangal of Bradford, who both knew that Karl Jaffey had something to do with the programming of Electric Dreams' *R-Type* conversion and that MIDI stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface. Well done chaps.

GILBERT ALERT!

Watch out, there's a Gilbert about! The cuddly, snotty alien, star of ITV's Get Fresh series is soon to make his debut on the computer screen thanks to Enigma Variations, who are currently working on a Gilbert The Alien arcade adventure. To celebrate, they've kindly donated 10 gooey Gilbert heads for us to give away in a competition. Now these heads are really tacky, slimy, sticky and downright disgusting – if you're a Gilbert fan you'll love 'em. And if you'd like to be the proud owner of one, all you have to do is make up a witty caption to accompany this photo of the lovable slime-bucket. Send your entries to GILBERT, ACE, at the Bath address, making sure they arrive no later than May 5th.

"Ere's an image for ya... Mahatma Ghandi burying a bicycle...

SOLUTION TO PRIZE PUZZLE NO12

The actual volume of Whisky taken (in nips) was:
40.703355359850032889593639350894
319698485395713171701738234795062 2
902695301208754137662344254958674 5199

And the first correct entry from the sack came from Steve Wood of Wolverhampton, who wins £25 worth of software for his ST.

At first sight, it might be thought that the volume taken would be 52 nips, but it should be remembered that for each nip after the first a small amount of water should be included in the volume, this amount increasing at each successive dilution.

After the first nip has been poured the bottle contains only 99/100ths of whisky so consequently the following week it will be reduced by a further 99/100ths of this amount. If this is repeated, the volume of actual whisky remaining in the bottle after each successive week will be given by the following series:

$$1 * \frac{99}{100} * \frac{99}{100} * \frac{99}{100} * \frac{99}{100} * \ldots$$

If this is repeated 52 times and the result subtracted from 100 (the original volume of whisky) the result will be the amount taken. A simple program to compute this might be:

```
T=100
FOR WEEK =1 TO 52
T=T*99/100
NEXT WEEK
PRINT 100-T
```

However, this will not give the EXACT volume as required by the question. In the following listing the actual computation is done by using strings to hold the values, only one digit at a time being taken and converted to a numeric variable for the actual mathematical operation to be carried out. Each successive digit is then converted back to a string variable to enable the full result to be built up in a second string. Note, too, the use of a 'carry' variable. The actual method used is precisely that which would be employed if the calculation were to be done using pencil and paper.

To avoid having a decimal answer until the end of the computation, only the multiplications (by 99) are performed in the early stage. This is done using the subroutine. As each operation results in the decimal point moving two places to the left (i.e. to divide by 100) a note of its position is kept in a separate variable (DP). Once the multiplication has been completed (lines 110 to 130), the result is subtracted from the volume of the bottle (lines 140 to 210). Again, this is done using strings to hold all of the digits. Finally, the position of the decimal point is assessed (line 220) and the result displayed.

LISTING

```
100 T$="100":DP=0
110 FOR WEEK=1 TO 52
120 GOSUB 1000
130 NEXT WEEK
140 A$="1"+STRING$(LEN(T$),"0"):T$="0"+T$
150 Z$="":CARRY=0
160 FOR F=LEN(T$) TO 1 STEP-1
170     V=VAL    (MID$(A$,F,1))-VAL(MID$(T$,F,1))
CARRY:CARRY=0
180 IF V<0 THEN CARRY=1:V=V+10
190 Z$=STR$(V)+Z$
200 NEXT F
210 IF LEFT$(Z$,1)="0" THEN Z$=MID$(Z$,2)
220 DP=LEN(Z$)-DP
230 PRINT "ACTUAL VOLUME OF WHISKY TAKEN:
"PRINT LEFT$(Z$,DP);".";MID$(Z$,DP+1)
240 END
1000 CARRY=0:P$=" ":DP=DP+2
1010 FOR F=LEN(T$) TO 1 STEP -1
1020 V=VAL (MID$(T$,F,1))*99+CARRY:CARRY=0
1030 IF V>9 THEN CARRY=V DIV 10:V=V MOD 10
1040 P$=STR$(V)+P$
1050NEXT F
1060 IF CARRY <>0 THEN P$=STR$(CARRY)+P$
1070 T$=P$:RETURN
```

This listing should run on any machine capable of running MicroSoft BASIC.

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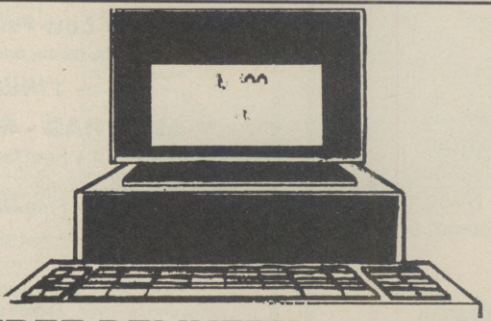

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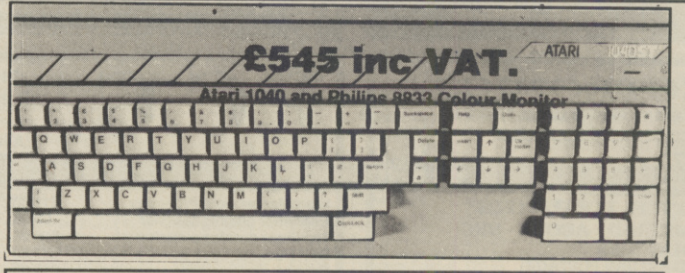

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Having some problems with Space Quest or Police Quest? Write to me, I've got all the answers. Albert Hoitingh. Oliedooomstraat 173, 2564 HH, The Hague, Holland.

Acheton, Adventure Quest, Aftershock, Apache Gold, Arnold Goes to Somewhere Else, Boggit, Bored of the Rings, Brawn Free, Classic Adventure, Castle Blackstar, Castle of Skull Lord, Colossal Adventure, Colour of Magic, Crystal Theft, Cursed Be The City, Dodgy Geezers, Dracula, Dungeon Adventure, Dungeons, A, A 'n' Everythin, Emerald Isle, Enchanter, Erik The Viking, Escape from Khoshima, Espionage, Island, Fantasia Diamond, Forest at Worlds End, Gnome Ranger, Guild of Thieves, Heavy on The Magick, Heroes of Karn, Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, Hobbit, Hunchback, Imagination, Inca Curse, Jewels of Babylon, Kentilla, Knight Orc, Kobyashi Naru, Lords of Time, Lost Phirious (Parts 1 & 3), Message from ndromeda, Mindshadow, Mordon's Quest, Necris Dome, Never Ending Story, Planet of Death, Price of Magik, Project Volcano, Qor, Questprobe III, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Robocide, Scary tales, Seabase Delta, Seas of Blood, Shymer, Smashed, Smuggler's Cove, Snowball, Sorceror, Souls of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spytrek, Star Wreck, Subsunk, Terrormolinos, The Pawn, The Trial of Arnold Blackwood, The Sydney Affair, The Vera Cruz Affair, Very Big Cave Adventure, Warlord, Wise and Fool of Blackwood, Worm in Paradise, Zork 1.
Joan Pancott Tel: 0305 784155 - Any Day - 1pm to 10pm.

I have completed the following: The Pawn, The Bard's Tale, Ultima IV, Phantasie I, Dracula, Never Ending Story, Zork III, Wishbringer, Enchanter, Borrowed Time, Kobyashi Naru, Heavy on the Magick, Legacy, The Prince of Magic, Claws of Despair, Wizards & The Princess.
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey. CR4 8EB.

Wishbringer, Labyrinth, The Hobbit, The Hulk, Spiderman, Seabase Delta, Kobyashi Naru.
Ann Gray, 9 Alness Close, Birchwood, Lincoln, Lincs. LN6 0YX.

Heroes of Karn, Imagination, Seabase Delta, D,A,A n Everythin, Fourth Protocol I, II & III, Ship of Doom, Message from Andromeda, Kobyashi Naru, Questprobe III, Forest at Worlds End, Wild Bunch, Knight Tyme, Spellbound, The Hobbit, Bugsy Part 1 only, Mops To, Heroes of Karn, Seabase Delta, Gremlins, Lord of the Rings (Part II only), Robin of Sherwood, After Shock.
Russell Cooper, 12 Butlers Close, 52 Butlers Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham. B20 2PA.

Let me know your problem with Football Director, The Double Soccer Boss, Premier League and Soccer Star and I'll sort you out. Send SAE to:Paul Phillips, 29 Ormestone House, Hartcliffe, Bristol.

For technical help on Commodore 64 Basic and Machine/Assembler language. Please contact Johnathan Kendall (for most problems would you please write!) I will endeavour to reply to all letters – if you enclose a stamped addressed envelope!
Johnathan Kendall, 27 Bishop Bridge Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 4ES. Tel: 0603 625987

The Pawn plus early stages for Guild of Thieves (I've only scored 300+ points so far).
Clive, 66 Billett Lane, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 1DR.

Jack The Ripper (p1-3), Dracula (p1-3), Hampstead, Big Sleeze and others.
N Buzzard, 11 Faversham Drive, Weston-super-Mare, BS24 9NZ.

I can help Spectrum owner with GAC, +2 loading problems, removing attribute clash + any basic programming problems. GAC, PAW and I also have an extensive knowledge if ZX BASIC. I can help fellow P B Mers on Hade Games 'Avalon'. Just send an SAE to:
Matt Burke, 33 Brookhouse Hill, Fulwood, Sheffield, S10 3TB.

Adventure Quest, Beyond Zork, Infidel, Plundered Hearts, Starcross, Trinity, Castle Blacktar, Classic/Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Gnome Ranger, Guild of Thieves, Hacker, H.H.G.T.G, Jinxter, Knight Orc, Leather Goddesses, Lords of Time, Mindshadow, Nord and Bert, The Pawn, Planetfall, Price of Magik, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Snowball, Wishbringer, Worm in Paradise. Phil Armstrong, 92 Dryden Road, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. NE9 5TX. Tel: (091) 4875639

For tech help on Dungeon Master Tel 0734 780508, ask for Chris.

Amiga owner willing to swap hints & tips on the following games:- Great Giana Sisters, Leathernecks XR35, F18 Interceptor, Test Drive, Xenon, Firepower, Hollywood Strip Poker, Tetris, ECO, Vampire Emprie, Soccer Supremo, Garrison I & II, Bubble bobble and over 100 more.
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Adventure Land, Colossal Adventure, Circus, Colditz, Greedy Gulch, Jewels of Babylon, Knights Quest, Magic Mountain, Pharaoh's Tomb, Eye of Bain, Planet of Death, Ship of Doom, Espionage Island, Hobbit, Invincible Island, Inca Curse, Ten Little Indians, Perseus and Andromeda, Lords of Time, SAE required with all requests for help.
Nirmal Singh, 104 Vansittart Road, London, E7 0AA.

Colossal Cave (original adventure), Guild of Thieves, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, The Pawn, Jinxter.
Clive J Mewse, 66 Billet Lane, Berkhamstead, Herts, HP4 1DR.

All aspects of BASIC especially adventures, debugging, compression and protection, simple machine code including RSXS, playtesting, poking. Please state level of understanding. Have got a CPC464, GT64, Multiface II+, DK 'tronics Speech rom. General Amstrad queries welcome but solutions not guaranteed.
Sean McManus, 226 Chertsey Rise, Stevenage, Herts. SG2 9JQ.

The Pawn and Knight Orc (part 1 and early part 2).
Shazad Ahmed, Tel: 01-340 9176 (4-10pm).

Jinxter, Pawn, Guild of Thieves, Leather Goddesses, Collosal Cave, Mr X.
Clive Mewse, 438A Ewel Road, Tolworth, Surbiton, KT6 7EL.

The Pawn, Guild of Thieves, Jinxter, Corruption, The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, Hollywood Hijinx and I have 80+ points on Wishbringer.
Anil Tohani, 5 Orchard Avenue, Rainham, Essex RM13 9NY.

Any help on Ultima V appreciated. All letters answered. I have most character replies on disc in text files, almost complete dungeon plans, and will attempt to reciprocate on any info.N.B.H Vickerstaff, 670 Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Cleveland, TS16 0DP. Tel: 0642 781073

Help on Hitchikers Guide to The Galaxy, Tasword, Qualitass, Tasprint, DMP2000. Ben Taylor, 5 Hope Street, Glossop, Derbyshire, SK13 9SB. Also help wanted on Stationfall.

C6464/128 Help Service, write to me with a list of games that you want help on and I will send it back post haste. Please send a SAE and remember it is for your arcade type games only. Write to Mark Essen, 26 Thick Hollins Drive, Meltham, Huddersfield, HD7 3DL. Hurry!

Fed up with a crap picture on your MCOI with Atari ST? SAE for help sheet to: C Parker, 14 Cross Lanes, Pill, Bristol BS20 0JQ. Phone Pill 5242 after 6pm.

For technical help on all aspects of 68000 assembly language programming on the Atari ST, send sae. to Simon Jones, 267 Ansty Road, Wyken, Coventry CV2 3FL.

Pawn, Planet Fall, Station Fall, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Hollywood Hijinx, Zork 2, Part of Dungeon Master (11th level), Starcross.
C Bass, 21 Third close, East Molesey, Surrey KT8 9PW.

Any help on Dragons Lair Screen three. Any pokes. All on Amstrad tape or disc. I have completed T.Renegade, Frost Byte. 0789-840274.

CBM 64 Programming Group send your problems with a SAE to Howie Bailey, 142 Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM11 1RN.

Any help appreciated with C64 adventure games and any info in general. Write to Fred McDonald, 17A Drum Trocher St, Kilsyth, Glasgow GG5 0LX.

Chrono Quest, The Pawn, Shadowgate, Uninvited, Dungeon Master, Half of Bermuda Project. G H Walker, 34 West Street, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 4AP.

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Help on Kings Quest 1, 2, 3, Leisure Suit Larry and Guild of Thieves and some Amiga games for sale. Ring Peter 0529 60684.

I have knowledge on many ST adventures, my speciality being The Bard's Tale, Borrowed Time, Tass Times in Tone Town, Jewels of Darkness, Corruption, Jinxter, Bureaucracy, The Grail and Questprobe 3, Human Torch and The Thing. Once again I offer my help to all adventurers!!
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I have a game called Caves of Doom which is an adventure game with its own book. This game is for the CBM 64 and I am having great trouble solving it. If anyone out there can help solve the adventure, then please write to Stephen Morgans, 48 Hanbury Walk, Bexley, Kent, DA5 2JJ.

Has anyone got any tips for any Sega especially for Teddy Boy , Fantasy Zone, The Maze, Kenseiden, Double Dragon, After Burner, Zillon 2, The Ninja, Rocky. Send the tips to Chris Mason, 54 Lochinver, Birch Hill, Bracknell, Berks, RG12 4LD.

I have completed the Bard's Tale I. If you want a map, please enclose 5p per map for photocopying. Write to John Riddoch, Limehillock Croft, Grange, By Huntly, Aberdeenshire AB5 5LA. Or phone Grange 643 for quick tips.

Write for help on any part of Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards. SAE to Colette Spoard, 14 Nevin House, Bourne Avenue, Hayes, Middx UB3 1QU.

Help wanted on Bards Tale. Have completed Dungeon Master, Phantasie III, Lords of Time, Golden Baton, Colossal Adventure. Alan Wheatley, 48 Cameron Crescent, Buckie, Banffshire, Scotland AB5 1DW. Tel 0542 32045. Weekends only.

Help, hints and bits of maps offered (but not complete solution) to the following: The Pawn, Guild of Thieves, Jinxter, Colossal Cave, Leather Goddesses of Phobos. Please say how many points you have scored and what you did to earn them (this helps me determine where you are) plus what is puzzling you. Write (with SAE) to Clive J Mewse, 438A Ewell Road, Tolworth, Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 7EL England.

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Ian Garner, 19 Rochester Grove, Hazel Grove, Stockport, Cheshire SK7 4JD. I have completed Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards and Police Quest. I have also got quite far on Hacker. Stephen Cotton, 2 Dawlish Close, Elmbrook, Nuneaton, Warks V11 6YR.

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Here is an updated list of adventures I can help with:-
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Pokes for C-64 lot of old games and most of the new games. Harry Jan Van Eyck st 28, 7741 YU Coevonden, Holland.

I can help ST owners with the following adventures, I solved them all. Amazon, Ballyhoo, Black Cauldron, Chrono Quest, Bowered Time, Corruption, Crimson Crown, Dallas, Enchanter, Fahrenheit, Gateway, Grail, Guild of Thieves, Hollywood Hijinx, Hitchhiker, Infidel, Jinxter, Kingsquest, 1 + 2 + 3 + 4, Legend of the Sword, Leisure Suit Larry 1 +2, Mask of the Sun, Mindshadow, Pawn, Perseus and Andromeda, Police Quest 1+2, Seastalker, Shadowgate, Sorcerer, Space Quest 1+2, Spiderman, Tass
Times and Tone Town,Transylvania, Uninvited, Wishbringer, Zork 1+3, The Fish!, Lurking Horror, Manhunter. Claessens Math, Wagenaarstr 58, 6164 XM Geleen (L), The Netherlands 4490 52532.

I have completed the following: Worm in Paradise, Return to Eden, Dracula, Dejavu and I know a lot about Shadowgate, Gnome Ranger and Pool of Radiance - Spyros Antoniou, 14 Aristovoulou Str. PS 246 Limassol, Cyprus.

Can anyone help me avoid a nervous breakdown by telling me how to get across the swamp in Shadows of Nordor. Stephen Kerr, 14 Wilton Drive, North Kelvinside, Glasgow G20 6RX.

Are you still fed up with a very bright picture on your MCO1, MCO5, MCO9 using the monitor port on your ST? Send SAE for free helpsheet and curcuit diagram to Clive Parker, 14 Cross Lanes, Pill, Bristol BS20 0JQ.
PS Wot no sound? From your Spectrum +2 or +3 thru your MCO1 etc. SAE or free circuit diagram to the same address or phone Clive on 027581 5242 after 6pm.

For help on Police Quest, Dungeon Master or Return to Eden or Snowball. Write to Karl Williams, 1 Spring Gardens, Letterston, Haverford West, Dyfed, Wales, SA62 5SH.

Help needed with Captain Blood and Guild of Theives, I also have cheats for Elite and Outrun. Write to Steven Laker, 58 Martin Hardie Way, Tonbridge Kent TN10 4AE.

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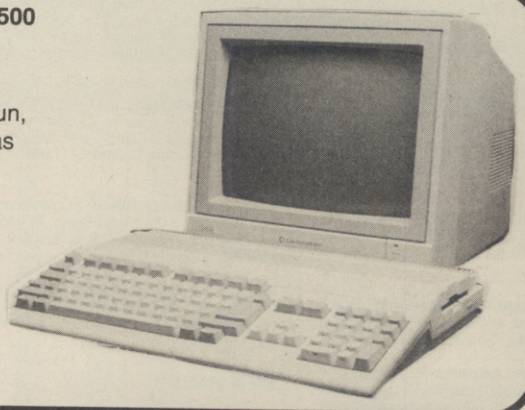

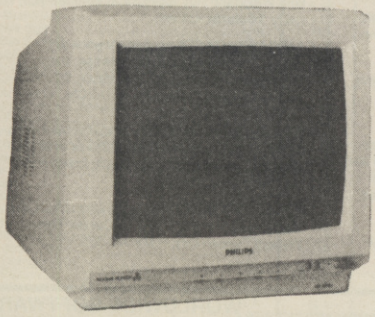

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PBM CORNER SKULLBALL

Since its launch, over 12 months ago, *Skullball* has rapidly increased its player base to the point where they have now got a waiting list three times larger than the 100 satisfied existing players.

As for many PBM companies, success brings problems. On The Brink, the designers of the game cannot cope with any more players and still maintain its high standards. The solution then has to be a computer-moderated version. Make it easy to play, with NO coded messages to decipher, but still allow room for the GM to add options and anecdotes, for that personal touch. Add a few new orders, while keeping the old ones, speed up the returns and improve the reliability. Still no hidden charges despite over 100 orders per turn and a free internal messaging system.

Then there's the new rule book, in colour, comprehensive but not complicated and full of diagrams and examples. No more of those faded return sheets as all returns will be printed on quality laser-printed sheets. Then there's the future of PBM to be considered and orders can be sent and received on floppy disks for the Amiga, ST, CPC, Spectrum and PC compatibles with future enhancements to the program to include animated graphics and 'what if' scenarios.

Behind all the programming is Stewart Green, whose previous work includes programming the PSS games *Annals of Rome*, *Tobruk* and *Pegasus Bridge*. He is also the designer and programmer of *Dark Blades* PBM. The computer-moderated *Skullball* is set for launch in May and will be run by newcomers Active Games, whose games will all be computer-moderated in order to run a fast, efficent and regular service. They will be producing their own games – a tactical space PBM is already in the pipeline – but are also interested in marketing other companies' games, if they meet the requirements. For more info contact:

ACTIVE GAMES, PO BOX 1500, HALESOWEN WEST MIDLANDS. B62 9EZ.

WHO YA GONNA CALL?

ACTIVISION! Stand by for the imminent launch of *The Real Ghostbusters* game, based on the popular cartoon series, with all your favourite characters and ghosties (Slimer, Slimer we want Slimer!) Be the envy of your street with a superb *Real Ghostbusters* T-Shirt! We've got 10 to give away, thanks to Activision. Now, these things ain't subtle: in fact they positively shout at you from the other side of the road, so if you win be prepared to wear them with pride! Talking of winning, how ya gonna win? Simply answer the questions and send them on a postcard or stuck-down envelope to BUSTERS, ACE at the Bath address making sure they arrive no later than 5th May. Doo da doo doo doo doo, doo doo da doo da da.

1. Who sang the Ghostbusters theme song?
2. What's Slimer's favourite pastime?
3. Name the four Real Ghostbusters.

TOYS DESIGNED TO MAKE MAGAZINES LATE...

After *Daleks* came *Crystal Quest*. Both of them Mac games that are simple, playable and horribly, horribly, horribly addictive. Now we at the ACE offices have something new to contend with.

This isn't software, but something you can actually touch. Enter the Sticky, Tacky Warrior. The what? Well, you know Graeme went to the toy fair last month? He managed to pick up a freebie that's had the office in stitches for days. The Sticky, Tacky Warrior is approximately 4" tall (at rest) and is made of some weird rubber/polymer (a bit like hard slime) that not only stretches in all directions, but has this amazing ability to stick to things: especially walls and ceilings!

Nowadays you can't work for more than 10 minutes without having to duck a flying Sticky, Tacky Warrior as it speeds over your head and crashes into the wall behind. Bandai, who manufacture the thing, should really have asked Graeme how close we were to deadlines before handing one over to him. As it is, we've got a manic editor a manic toy to play with!

THE BLITTER END...

GREEN ALIEN ON EMISSION FROM OUTER SPACE HAD SEX WITH MY COMPUTER

"We were just going about our business as software publishers when this blinding blue light filled our office," explained shocked game impresarios Mark Greenshields and Richard Naylor. "Then this horrible green man slid into the room on a trail of snot, announced that his name was Gilbert and told us he had come all the way from the planet Drill to become a superstar."

Mark and Richard apparently woke up a week later to find they had almost completed a game, and couldn't remember a thing about it. Pausing only the refuel their B52 Bomber, the software heroes set a course for the moon **(Cont P194)**

NAVY MOVES

In an unprecedented step, Microprose has stepped up the war against suit-wearing software pirates. Anyone found pirating a copy of their new action game *Navy Moves* will have a free watch strapped to their wrist and the offending appendage chopped off. Martin Moth, Public Relations manager for the firm demonstrates to Blitter End readers how he will be using his rusty penknife in conjunction with a traditional stone block to sever the hands of offenders... (Oh alright then, we were making it all up. Buy a copy of *Navy Moves* and you get a free hand with an exclusive Navy Seal digital watch strapped to it...)

WHITE HORSE IN LEATHER BONDAGE SHOCK

Animal rights campaigners yesterday completely ignored the plight of a stallion who complained he had been mercilessly strapped into strange leather apparatus and paraded around a field by two promotions people wearing strange costumes.

"I have never been so ashamed in my life," the horse told our reporter, "this stunt to promote *Might and Magic II* was carried out in full view of passing motorists on the M25. I was publicly humiliated by these hat-wearing con merchants. I feel thoroughly taken for a ride."

"Still, that's fantasy role-playing for you," commented the horse's agent. Readers who would like to hear the horse neighing against the throaty roar of motorway traffic can dial 0898....

WINNERS BOX.... Cluttering up Mark Woolard's front room soon will be that completely brilliant Star Wars arcade machine that was on offer as a prize in the great ACE/Domark competition back in Issue 17. The lucky Milton Keynes chappie was the first to be pulled from the sack with the correct answers, namely: Mark Hamill, X-wing fighter, Tarkin, Vektor Grafix and Alderan. Well done Mark, and we hope you get years of free fun in your front room!

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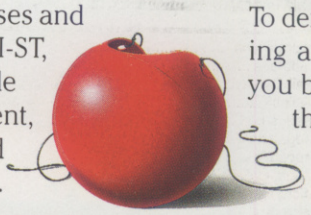

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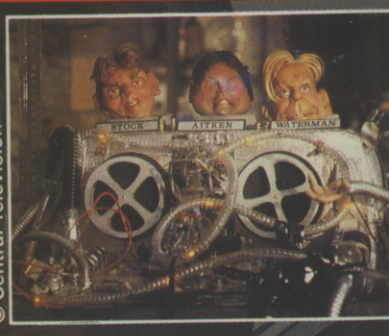

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